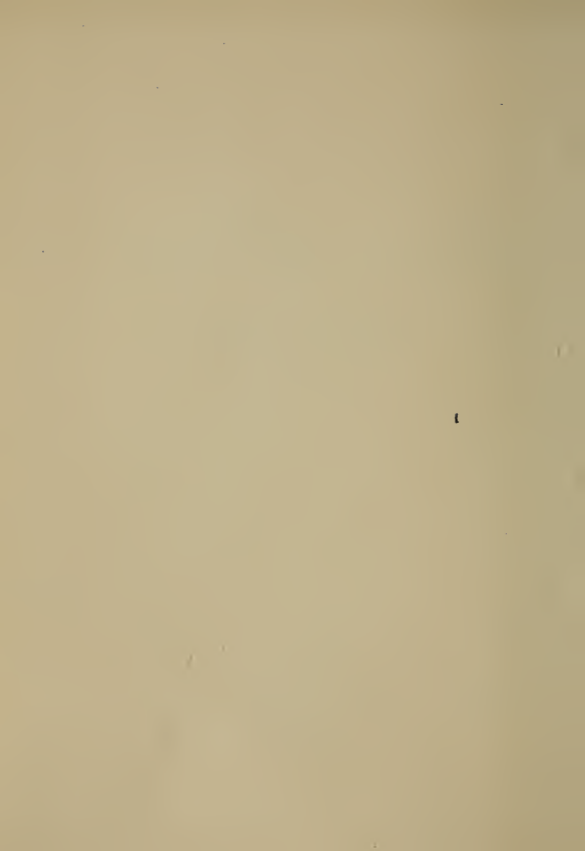






Jene Owen

2/10/06.



*Irene Anne Owen*  
*St Marys*  
*Dominican Convent*  
*Gabra*  
*Dublin*

**SIMPLE MEDITATIONS  
ON THE LIFE OF OUR LORD  
First Series**



Simple Meditations  
on  
the Life of Our Lord

By the Right Rev.

JOSEPH OSWALD SMITH

Abbot of Ampleforth

FIRST SERIES

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J. A. WILSON, O.S.B., D.D.

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✠ F. A. GASQUET, O.S.B., D.D.,

*Abbot of Reading,*

*President General of the English Congregation  
of the Order of St Benedict.*



## PREFACE



I HAVE been asked by some friends who have seen them to publish the following little meditations. They were originally written without any thought of making them public. When I had written some of them for my own use, I ventured to send one or two to various people who had asked me to help them in their prayer. The way in which they were welcomed by these pious souls encouraged me to write down a large number—many more than are found in this little book—and for some years I have lent them in manuscript to those who were kind enough to ask me for them.

It is in the hope that they may help some simple souls to overcome the difficulty they have found in meditation that I have consented to put them in print.

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## NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

IN this second edition a number of small changes have been made in accordance with the suggestions of friendly critics.

J. O. S

*Lent, 1904.*



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## INTRODUCTION

### A Simple Instruction on Mental Prayer

MENTAL Prayer is converse with God as with a personal friend. If we could only bring ourselves to treat God as a friend who is intensely interested in everything which concerns us, who has made us to be happy with Him and therefore to know Him very intimately and love Him very dearly, our prayer would surely be easy.

The revelation of God's idea of friendship can be obtained more truly from the idea of friendship which we get from our own experience of our friends than from any hard process of thinking.

When we know a person really well and like him and come to trust him a little, we find pleasure in talking to him, and by degrees we come to take delight in telling him

everything which concerns us; we tell him our likes and dislikes, our projects and disappointments, our difficulties and our triumphs. Whenever we come to trust such a one, if we are happy enough to know anyone in this way, whatever we are doing, his opinion helps us, and we wonder whether he will praise or blame us.

God wants us to make a friend of Him, and a most intimate friend, and therefore He wants us to talk to Him about everything which interests us in any way. This is prayer—to take Almighty God into our confidence and tell Him all about ourselves, asking His advice and help. “His delight is to be with the sons of men.” And though His Son became Man primarily to save us from sin, He came also that He might get nearer to us and might enable us to talk with Him more intimately. Again He came to show us what He would have us do in order to become more friendly with Him. This is the reason why it is good for us in our prayer to take some event in our Lord’s



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life, or some words uttered by Him, as a kind of subject of our prayer, always remembering that our Lord did that action or said those words in some way for me. He was weary for my sake, that I might learn even in my weariness to be interested in a poor sinner's conversion, as He was at the well in Samaria. He said, "I thirst," thinking of me and my tepidity in His service. He healed the lepers, and so on, to teach me something. In this way I become a witness of His life for my own good, just as Jesus would have me be. He wishes me to talk to Him about His own life and His words and actions as they concern myself. Thus His life is the material of prayer.

Thus you see there are two things to be conversed about—myself and our Lord ; and before we can talk intimately with God, we must have some knowledge of both.

We must know ourselves, our strength and our weakness, and this knowledge can only be gained if we are very sincere with ourselves. Sincere means pure-minded, i.e.,

not caring to be deceived, and desirous of the truth, however painful it may be to us. We are sincere when we try our best to get at the real truth about ourselves. We gain this truth by careful examination for confession. The effort to take pains must be made, if our prayer is to be of any good at all. Without sincerity about ourselves our prayer becomes mere talk, and it is not blessed by our Lord.

Then comes the knowledge of the life of our Lord. This can be obtained from careful reading of the Gospel. It is necessary in this reading to remember two things: first, that it is all about our dearest friend; and second, that every act and every word is meant for me—was done or spoken in my presence. If you ever had a real friend, were you not curious about his life? Did you not love to hear of anything that had happened to him before you knew him, what his parents were like, what his companions were like, what he had done, what he had desired to do, what he had said on

various occasions? Once really love our Lord and you will be just as anxious to know His life; and there are plenty of means by which you may get to know a good deal about Him. If you are really sincere with yourself, and really love our Lord, your difficulties in prayer will vanish.

Now as to the reasons why you have failed so far. They are mostly of two kinds—first, that you have taken up the practice of mental prayer not so much because you yourself thought you could make any good out of it, but because some one or other told you it was a good thing; second, because the method proposed to you did not 'suit you. The work of the memory, understanding and will was divided up as carefully as if it were a treatise in a philosophical book; you were affected just about as much as if it were philosophy. The words meant very little to you, and the whole thing seemed very difficult and above you, and therefore it did no good. What you require is some very simple, plain method.

The main aids to good mental prayer are sincerity and humility in thinking of self, and a simple, loving knowledge of God. It is a help to take some aspiration fitting the morning's prayer, to repeat now and again during the day.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine.

The “Facts in our Lord's life” may be read through slowly: then the “Facts in my own life.” If these latter suit you, well and good; if not, they may suggest to you facts in your own life which may show you the contrast between your life and that of our Lord. The prayer, i.e., the converse with God, is only given to help, and in no way to bind. God grant that some soul may gain something by the use of these little meditations!

## On Mortification

[Not a few of those who have sought for help in prayer, after practising mental prayer for a short time, have asked me to suggest some mortification which they might undertake. Indeed, it is impossible for one who is earnest in the practice of mental prayer not to recognize the great truth that success in prayer rests a great deal on mortification. The two go hand in hand. The following note was written in answer to one who wished to do something out of the ordinary in the matter of mortification : I hope it may be of use to others.]

IN the matter of mortification it is necessary to act with advice, and indeed the advice ought always to be that of some one who knows you. Chance advice in this matter is almost always wrong. Hence, you are not too readily to take up practices thrown before you in sermons or spiritual books. Again, even when you have taken

up some practice, you must be careful not to get attached to it, but always be willing to give it up if required. Self-will makes a mortification quite useless, and often turns it into a snare and a delusion. Mortifications which stand in the way of your ordinary work are nearly always snares of the devil. Any mortification which you take pride in must be again submitted to your confessor. There are plenty of means of mortifying yourself without doing anything out of the way. You may restrain your tongue by trying to make your voice low and kind. You may restrain your eyes by not looking into other people's business. You may restrain your ears by not listening to conversation about the faults of others. You may find an occasion for going out of the room just as a story is getting interesting, staying when it ceases to be interesting ; you can restrain your hands by not interfering with other people's work unless for charity ; not doing what you know some one else wishes to do. You can mortify your sense

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of smell by not calling attention to annoyance to that sense. Mortification, to be truly such, is always kind, always considers the effect of the action on others.

You must then take advice ; receive what trials are sent to you cheerfully. Be careful always to consider others and what kindness demands. Then your mortification will be blessed.





# Simple Meditations

on

## the Life of our Lord

### I

#### The Annunciation

##### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

FROM eternity God had determined to take to Himself the nature of man, and yet our Lord did not become man till long after He had created Adam. One reason of the delay was because He did not find anyone perfectly willing to be His mother ; that is, He did not find anyone willing to submit herself absolutely to His will. When the angel came to the Blessed Virgin Mary and gave God's message to her, she immediately submitted her will. As soon as God's will was made known to her she put aside every trace of hesitation. She wilfully chose God's will. She did not understand it ; she did not know

how His will was to be accomplished, but she knew that she was safe in God's hands. She knew He was right and had her interests at heart. He asked her to be His mother. If He had asked her to give up her life she would have been just as willing. Our Lord is always waiting for me to do His will.

*Facts in my own Life*

How different my life has been ! I have sought first my own way in all things. It is only seldom that I ask myself whether my way is God's way. Sometimes, no doubt, it does strike me to ask myself whether I am following God's will, but even then I am for the most part anxious to defend my own will, and am pleased to hear from anyone that what I will is right. But to give up my own will, to submit in any way, has been a task I have not enjoyed. If what He asked of me has not seemed to me to lead to my own comfort, to my own ease, I have lost heart, I have lost interest, I have found it hard to keep going.

Even when I have known that He was asking something of me, I have longed for my own way of doing it ; and when circumstances or those who are living with me have prevented me having my own way, I have so frequently left the work I had undertaken for God ; I must do God's work in my own way or not at all.

O Jesus, my kind and good Saviour, how good it was of you to take my nature and make it your own to teach me how worthless my way is unless it is your way also ! How kind it is of you so gently to correct me ! You have not scolded me though I have richly deserved it. How thoughtful it was of you for my sake to choose Mary for your mother, that I might learn from her how to submit myself to others also !

Mary, my mother and my model, obtain for me some of the love with which you received the message of the angel, knowing that it was God's message also. How I should have hesitated if the angel had come to me ! I should have counted all the diffi-

culties and crosses, and I should have been unable to face them, for I should have relied on myself and not on God as you did. Help me, poor cowardly creature that I am. Make me think, not of myself, but of my God in all things.

O my mother, who for your submission to God's will, and for your humility, relying nothing on yourself, but wholly on God, did receive your Jesus and mine as your own, show Him to me, dear mother. Introduce Him to me that I may know Him and love Him better and better day by day. Ask of Him, dear mother, that He would lead me in His way, that He would not leave me to myself.

*Aspiration.*—“Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done unto me according to Thy word.”

## II

## St Joseph and the Blessed Virgin before the Birth of our Lord

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

LOOK first at our Lady, and notice how full she is of joy, for she has been chosen by God to be the mother of His only-begotten Son. She sees St Joseph's surprise and anxiety, but she does not give him any explanation. She does not defend herself. She knows well that God will reveal the mystery in His own time and in His own way.

Then look at St Joseph, and notice how full of love he is for our Lady. He does not understand her state, but he never doubts her virtue. He leaves the explanation to God. Then notice the joy with which he receives the message of the angel, bidding him fear not.

*Facts in my own Life*

How often I have suspected wrong where none existed ! How often I have taken upon myself the task, duty as I called it, of finding out for myself the truth about some one of my acquaintance ! Thus, if anything out of the ordinary happens in the house, I am not happy till I know all about it, especially if any conduct of my sisters or brothers, or of one of the servants excites remark ; or if the priest annoys me, I can never leave the matter alone.

O Jesus, how I thank you for your kindness in giving me this lesson ! It was good of you, Lord, to let St Joseph suffer all the anxiety about your mother. It was good of you to allow your mother to be under suspicion for my sake. I see now how you would have me act when I suspect wrong. How good of you it was to think of me and my weakness, even when you were so entirely united to one whom you loved more than all the world ! Do not let me be so centred in

myself that I cannot feel for others. And you, dear mother, teach me to be slow to excuse myself, teach me not to feel hurt when blamed, even though the blame is unreasonable. Teach me to leave even my good name in God's hands.

And you, too, dear foster-father St Joseph, teach me to be kind, especially to those of my own family; not to be easily annoyed, not to exaggerate what may appear wrong, not to inquire too closely into the actions of my friends, and certainly not to talk of their faults. Gain for me just a little of your own kind, quiet, trustful spirit. Make me less hard in my judgements and less suspicious of all those with whom I live.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

## III

## Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lady and St Joseph were the guardians of Jesus. They knew He was coming to them, and were anxious to prepare a fit place for Him. They were hindered at every turn. There was no room in the inns ; no room in private houses. Each family had its own friends. Mary and Joseph did not complain, nor did they cease to look for shelter, but went plodding on from house to house. God would provide. They did not grumble, neither were they annoyed, though they were both so very weary. When at last they found shelter they tried to make the best of it. St Joseph set to work to make the cave as comfortable as possible for our Lady, using the scanty means at his command—a little straw for the Child to lie upon ; a hurdle inter-



laced with straw to stop the entrance of the cave. Our Lady prepared the swaddling clothes. Then when Jesus was born she attended to His comfort, and she forgot all the weariness in her joy of His birth.

*Facts in my own Life*

WHEN I have anything to do and am crossed or hindered, I let everyone who sees me know my annoyance. I am so often annoyed in the face of opposition that I omit the work I had intended to do. I am not so much annoyed that the work has been hindered as that I have been interfered with. I complain, perhaps not openly, but certainly to myself. Then the work suffers. When I am allowed, I do it, but poorly, in a hurry, carelessly, and afterwards I put the blame on those who have opposed me.

O Jesus, I thank you for allowing all this trouble for my sake. How kind it was of you to let your mother and St Joseph suffer all this annoyance that I might learn how to act when I have to suffer small crosses and

hindrances in my work ! I like to think of you, dear Lord, pleased if any good woman in Bethlehem was kind to your mother. They were not all rough with her, were they ? Some of them were kind to her, at least in their looks, and you blessed them.

There was no room for you, Lord, but some were sorry that they could not take you in. Ah, let me find room for you and make you warm with my love. I have refused to receive you sometimes in Holy Communion. I have made excuses, and not roused myself to take you into my heart.

Mary, my mother, teach me to persevere in spite of difficulties. St Joseph, teach me to make the best of my opportunities to make Jesus welcome. I cannot do much for Him, but I can do that little with love.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, make my heart like unto yours.

## IV

## The Birth of our Lord

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

UP to the moment of His birth our Lady had never seen her Son, and He had never seen His mother with His human eyes. He had not seen the world He had created as we see it. He had seen it in a much higher and more perfect way, but not in precisely the same way that we see it. Thus it was all new to Him. He had longed to see His mother's face, and she had longed to see her Child, and to delight His heart with her loving eyes.

The Nativity is the mystery of kind looks. Gentleness and kindness in look was a gift which our Lord was fond of using. We are told there was one young man whom He looked upon and loved. It was in the first moment of His life that He consecrated to

Himself the power of influencing man by His calm, loving, interested eyes.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE thought little of the good I might do by kind looks. Often when spoken to I do not take my eyes from my work, from the letter I am writing, the book I am reading. Often, too, I fail to do good because I find it a trouble to show any interest in what others speak to me about. I have, no doubt, often failed to see what God wished me to do or to see—opportunities of showing kindness. Even when I have seen them, my eyes have shown no sign of interest, have given no encouragement.

O Jesus, I thank you for this lesson. How you must have enjoyed the first look at your mother's face, the first glance of her eyes! How you loved to look at St Joseph and watch him at his work, and mark the kindness of his ministry to your mother! Give me, dear Lord, the grace to use the power you have given to me, to look with

kind regard on your friends for your sake. Teach me to bring joy and not sorrow by the glance of my eyes. However cross and annoyed I may sometimes feel, give me the strength of will to keep my crossness from my eyes. Let me never anger another by my angry eyes.

O Mary, my mother, I want to thank you for putting our Lord into the manger so that you might see Him more thoroughly, might see the love in His eyes, and that He might teach me the power of kindness in look.

*Aspiration.*—Dear Jesus, look upon me and love me !

## V

## The Birth of our Lord

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE inconveniences our Lord suffered at the time of His birth were but the first of a long series to which He willingly submitted Himself. He did so in order to help me and give me an example of courage and steadfastness.

His first experience was that He was an outcast. He was to experience rejection all through His life. Here, as in later events, He would keep by Him some few friends. His heart warmed to our Lady and St Joseph, as it did to all those who in all future time should try to befriend Him: clothing Him in the person of His poor; adorning His house in the Sacrament of the altar where He dwells; teaching Him in the person of the ignorant; feeding Him in the

person of His destitute friends ; seeking opportunities of being kind to members of His body, which St Paul tells us is His Church. He is helpless that we may be kind to Him ; cold, that we may warm Him.

*Facts in my own Life*

I AM always suffering, or fancying that I suffer, inconveniences—not having much to spend, though all my real wants are supplied ; not being noticed and made much of by some of my own relations, though there are others who are always thoughtful for me ; inconveniences also from sickness, inconveniences from weather, and the like. I have got into the habit of not showing much annoyance over most of these things, still they drive me into myself, prevent me from thinking of the needs and comfort of other people.

O Jesus, how much I thank you for going through all these inconveniences for my sake ! How kind of you to submit to rejection, almost by all ; not quite by all, Lord, was it ? Was I included ? Did you see me

reject you, put you out into the cold? How often I have done so by my laziness, my carelessness, my grumbling! Teach me, dear Lord, to learn your lesson of not being driven into myself; always, as you, thinking of others when I am in pain or crossed. So far, I have so often just closed my mouth and sulked when in a bad humour. Teach me to avoid the bad humour for your sake, to give some little comfort to you. How I wish I might have helped your mother and St Joseph! Ah, I can do it now; I can be kind to you, not always hanging back because it will take my time when there is some one who can be instructed or cheered or helped in innumerable ways. Let me, dear Lord, have the grace to sacrifice myself a little to give you pleasure.

*Aspiration.*—“Amen, I say to you, if you do it to one of My little ones, you do it to Me.”



## VI

## The Shepherds come to Adore

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord sent the angels to tell the shepherds that He was born, and to bring them to the cave. The angels were sent to those of least account in the country about Bethlehem. The shepherds were poor, in all probability, dirty, ignorant men whom most would avoid. But they were sincere and innocent, and these are the ones whom God loves, and whom the angels delight to visit. The angels bring them peace and joy, and lead them to Jesus.

*Facts in my own Life*

I OUGHT to be a promoter of the interests of Jesus, and there are some at least in the town and round about it to whom I could bring peace and joy, and whom I could help to know Jesus better. There are those who

are poor and ignorant, and some of them, no doubt, dirty. Most people would say that if they need my help they ought to come to me. Jesus sent His angels to such. I know more about Him than most of the poor and the neglected. I can do a great deal for them, not by giving money only—the angels did not bring food or clothing or money to the shepherds. I can do what the angels did. I can teach a little, I can bring peace by advice and kindness; and I can lead them to Jesus. I have done so very little so far, I will not try to make just a spurt which will not last, but I will try to take opportunities which present themselves to do this angels' work for my Lord.

O Jesus, how kind it was of you to send these angels to the poor shepherds for my sake! How kind of you to teach me whom you wish me to help, whom to bring to you! You have been so kind to me to let me know something about you, and to give me some little experience of teaching little ones that I might be able to help others so neglected,

so poor. I do thank you for this. I can then do something for you. How ashamed I have been to do this angels' work! how touchy about what so and so would think of me if I were to begin! Ah, Lord, you have shown me what you think of it. Grant me the grace not to hold back from any cowardly motive whenever you send me to the poor. I cannot, dear Lord, give much time, nor have I much of anything to give, but it is good of you to let me do anything for you. Give me grace to see what I can do, and courage to do it for your sake. Give me grace to-day to find some one whom I may help. Teach me not to be hard with the poor; not to make a jest of what they may say to me; not to use anything I may learn about them in order to make conversation, unless it is edifying. Only let me be anxious to bring good tidings and peace to all to whom you send me, and to lead them to you, dear Lord.

*Aspiration.*—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.”

## VII

## The Kings come to Adore

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

HE began at once to attract men to Himself. He uses different means with different men. With these wise men He makes use of their knowledge of astronomy. He brings them from a great distance and makes apostles of them. He wishes to attract all. "I will draw all things to myself." These wise men come and offer what they have: gold, their substance in His service; incense of prayer, their time in His service; myrrh of self-restraint. So in His later life He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God." "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall ask in My name it shall be given to you," and "Blessed are ye when ye suffer persecution."

*Facts in my own Life*

I ALSO have been drawn by our Lord, but I have held back. I have not followed Him with whole-heartedness. I have found it hard to give for His sake either substance or time. I have grudged Him time for prayer, and the effort necessary for good prayer. I have given Him very little in the way of mortification, even those which He has lovingly sent me—sickness, uncongenial companions, aches and pains I have not borne very patiently. Any little sacrifice of money or time for the sake of those He has given to me I have hesitated over or given without cheerfulness.

O Jesus, how kind it was of you to show me how mean I have been to you and yours! Forgive me, Lord, and now at last take my heart and my all. Teach me to give for you. Not to haggle with myself what I ought to part with; not to consider so much whether I can lawfully retain things, but rather whether I can do without, so that

I may be able to be kind to others for your sake. How good of you also to take frankincense from these wise men! How little I have given you! How cold have been my prayers! how careless! how hurried! What little trouble I have taken to learn how to pray! How little attention I have given to those who have tried to teach me! Now, Lord, that you have been so good to me, let me profit by your goodness. Let me not lose the time by laziness, by want of effort. As to mortification, dear Lord, I will follow your kind advice given me by my confessor. Teach me and strengthen me. How foolish I might be in this way if you had left me to myself! Teach me to willingly take what trials you have sent me or will send me, in the household, in the misunderstanding of others. Let me, dear Lord, learn to be willing to take trouble for your sake.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, take from me what you desire; I will give it freely.

## VIII

## The Flight into Egypt

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as Jesus comes to us we turn Him away, and He goes, for the time, only to come back again. So it was always in His life. He was driven from Bethlehem, from Nazareth, from Cana in Galilee, from Jerusalem, and always returned doing good. So in his flight He would take His Mother and St Joseph with Him, and He would with them and through them do good always. Jesus bore no malice, was always ready to forgive ; never on any occasion did He say : "Because you have done so and so against Me, I will not speak to you, I will not take interest in your good."

*Facts in my own Life*

IF any one is hard on me, I remember it. If any one refuses to take a word of advice,

I close up and never think of trying a second time. No ; I have been bitten once, I will be twice shy, as the saying is. If I am prevented from doing one kind of work I am out of temper for a time, instead of setting to work at something which I can do. If I have been rudely treated at one place, I make up my mind never to go there again. The two methods are rather far apart, are they not ?

O Jesus, how kind of you to give me this lesson ! How kind to begin at the very first to show me so plainly how I ought to behave when I receive a rebuff ! Let me have you with me, dear Lord, and Mary and Joseph. In your company I may have strength to act more disinterestedly, less selfishly. I do so wish to learn these little kind, forgiving ways from you, my Lord. I find it so hard, not so much to look as though I did not feel slights and cross words, but really to forgive them at once, to excuse them and thank you for them.

I am so grateful to you, my Jesus, for



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your kindness in letting me see how I have done wrong. Teach me also to imitate you fully. Give me some of your own strength and love.

*Aspiration.*—Make my heart like unto Thine !

## IX

## The Massacre of the Innocents

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

To secure the destruction of our Lord, Herod ordered the slaughter of all male infants up to two years of age in the district of Bethlehem. He failed to obtain his object, though he was able to inflict a most serious injury on the country. Why did our Lord allow such a butchery? First, to assert His right to take life when He wishes; secondly, to show how He can frustrate all the wiles of the world; thirdly, to be very kind to these children by taking them out of danger and securing heaven for them. They form the bodyguard of our Lord in heaven. They are very close to Him now.

*Facts in my own Life*

I ONLY look at the present effect of pain and loss, forgetting that all pain may be made

a gift to our Lord. He sends me pain not simply to hurt me, but to give me something to offer to Him ; something which He wants to reward me for. I receive it, but not always willingly. When I hear of pain borne by others, especially the poor, I am inclined to grumble at God's providence. I do not, as I ought, see how His work may be furthered by pain, by loss. As usual, I am mostly thinking of myself ; nursing my grievance, instead of willingly and cheerfully enduring, and helping others to endure, what pains He, in His mercy, sends me and those I love.

O Jesus, it was kind of you to let these poor innocents suffer for their own sakes and for me also. Let me learn the lesson of their death. Teach me that life and ease here are not the end of all. Teach me that your work may always be furthered by my suffering. Let me, not only in word but in deed, cheerfully take what you give me to suffer, and give it back to you to be used for your own ends. It is not much, Lord, that you ask me

to bear. I will not add to the suffering of others by obtruding my own, but I will calmly and cheerfully thank you.

*Aspiration.*—Let me suffer for Thee and with Thee, Lord.

## X

## The Life at Nazareth

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

JESUS was the most holy one on earth. His mother, infinitely below Him in sanctity, came next, and an immeasurable distance above any other. St Joseph came last. This was the order of sanctity.

The very opposite was the order of obedience. The first, with full authority over the others, was St Joseph. The second, our Lady, owing obedience to St Joseph, and claiming obedience from our Lord ; and last, the Infant Jesus, the subject of both. He voluntarily chose the lowest place.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE been given authority over others in many ways, and I have found it difficult not to assume authority where I have none. I

try to get my own way with all, not only with those I have some authority over, but also with those who have authority over me. I do give in, indeed, at times, but with a bad grace, and then I do not fail to let people know that what I proposed would have been better. I may not say as much, but I look it. Sometimes I make quite a disturbance over a very trivial matter.

O Jesus, how kind and considerate it was of you to take the lowest place and be subject so completely to your Mother and foster-father, though by all titles you had absolute authority over both, and an authority, too, which both of them would have been willing to acknowledge. It was kind of you for my sake to be a child and to obey in all things, not questioning, as sometimes you might have done, the wisdom of the orders given; not correcting St Joseph when he took wrong measurements and made ill-fitting joints, though you knew so much better. Teach me to submit readily, not simply to keep silence and seek for opportunities to change the order

given. Teach me not to give advice except in a humble way ; not to assert myself, but only the truth ; not to lay too much stress on the capital letter I ; not to jest about orders given or about mistakes made by those who have authority over me. Make me ready cheerfully to do another's will even against my own.

*Aspiration.*—“ Not my will, but Thine be done ! ”

## XI

## The Loss of Jesus at Jerusalem

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

ST Joseph took our Lady and her son up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Pasch. Our Lord was twelve years old, and able, as St Joseph thought, to look after Himself; thus, when the feast was over, he was not surprised that Jesus was not with them. He took for granted that He was not far off, and in the evening, when the camping ground was chosen, though tired, he and our Lady went about seeking the Child. They did not find Him with any of their friends and relations, so without delay they returned to Jerusalem to seek Him. They did not find Him at all soon. After three days they found Him in the Temple.



*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE often lost Jesus, not by great sins, thank God, but by letting something not Jesus come into my life: laziness, for example; selfishness in my little properties—our Lord is never with me when I am selfish; wilfulness in my methods of work—He is never with me when I am wilful; carelessness in my prayer—He is never with me as much or as closely as He would like to be when I am careless in prayer; want of courage to do what I know to be His will when it may make me seem ridiculous—Jesus is never very close to a coward. And so of other occasions. I have not been used to look for Him very assiduously. I have gone on being lazy; I have persisted in my wilfulness; I have been careless for months; I have been sensitive to ridicule ever since I can remember.

O Jesus, how hard it was for you to leave Mary and Joseph! but you did it to bring home to me how I ought to seek you.

Thank you, dear Lord, for doing so, for hiding yourself that I might learn how to look for you and find you. You put St Joseph and your mother Mary to pain for my sake. Thank you, and may you be ever blessed for the love you thus showed for me. As soon as I am conscious that you are not with me, Lord, through my own fault, give me grace to seek you till I find you. Mary, my mother, help me to find your Son; help me to know Him better; help me to love Him so intensely that I may at once recognize when He is not near me. And holy St Joseph, teach me your own quiet, humble, thorough way of seeking Jesus; never to lose heart till I find Him and take Him back to myself.

*Aspiration.*—“Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.”

## XII

## The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AT last they come to the Temple and find Jesus with the doctors or teachers of the law, listening to them and asking them questions. All wondered at His prudence and His answers; and His mother said to Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." Notice how she puts St Joseph first. And Jesus answered: "Why have you sought Me? Did you not know I must be about My Father's business?" Notice that He was listening to the doctors, though He had given them all the knowledge that they possessed; asking questions as a disciple; it was His way of bringing the best out of these men. Jesus was always trying to get the best out of those whom He dealt with.

He was not asking questions or giving answers simply for show. He wanted these men to have an opportunity to allow Him to help them by His grace.

Then, again, our Lady gives an example of humility. All the authority which St Joseph had over our Lord came to Him because he was Mary's husband. It was through her, and yet she sinks herself and puts him forward. Then again, there is the assertion of our Lord: "Did you not know I must be about My Father's business?" Our Lady and St Joseph in their anxiety for Him were forgetting,—and He would not have any of His friends ever forget—that the business of His Father, that is, the salvation of souls, the salvation of my soul, is the business He has always at heart, is always intensely interested over.

*Facts in my own Life.*

I AM not a very good listener, especially when anything is spoken of which I know something about. I want to have my word

in, not in the form of a question as though for information, but in the form of a correction. I, indeed, propose questions sometimes ; but mostly when I am not interested, or when I fancy I cannot shine, I prefer to go out. Listening quietly and asking prudent questions, not contentious ones, bring the best out of the speaker. Then, again, I prefer to put myself forward if I have a right, and I do not like another to get what recognition I consider belongs to me. I do not think it is fair that another should get praise for what I have done. Again, I am often forgetful of my Father's business. When I get a chance of doing good to others, I am deterred by the thought of what others will say of me. Our Lord submitted to the only word of complaint on record from His mother (she could not have ridiculed Him, but she seemed to be blaming Him) just to show me that I must be ready to face some inconvenience or annoyance when there is question of my Father's business.

O Jesus, what a number of lessons you teach me here! Thank you, dear Lord, for all the trouble you have taken over me. How little I have thought that I was not following in your footsteps when I was so hasty to get away from the talk of visitors or callers. Teach me to endure even stupid talkers for your sake. Teach me to change my manner if I may do your work by so doing.

Mary, my mother, get me this beautiful lowly spirit to put others first, even though I have the right to be first.

Jesus, make me unite myself to you always in being interested over souls. I might do so much by a little kindness, a little forgetfulness of self, a little more thought of the duty to be interested over my Father's business.

*Aspiration.*—Our Father, who art in heaven, Thy kingdom come!

## XIII

## The Youth of our Lord

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

HE went down to Nazareth and was subject to Mary and Joseph. His mother kept His words in her heart, and Jesus grew in wisdom and age and grace with God and men. This is all we know about the life of our Lord for eighteen years. He is said by the Holy Spirit to have grown in wisdom and in grace, because, though He knew all things and had all grace, He wished to show to men while He was in subjection only that wisdom which might have been expected from a boy of His age; and we know that He always wished to hide from others the great grace which was His during His whole life. So He sat at the feet of Mary His mother, and learned the psalms which He had inspired and the prophecies which He

had revealed. Thus His growth in wisdom depended on His subjection.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE not grown much in wisdom and grace, though I have somewhat in age. I am really wiser in some ways, of course: but in the way in which our Lord would have me grow I have not made much progress. In grace I have been at a standstill for a long time. Perhaps it has been the want of subjection, which was the condition of our Lord's growth, which has stunted my growth. I have not been particularly subject, for example, to the priests of the mission; I have not considered that I should learn much from them or from any members of my family. It never struck me to listen and learn. If St Joseph, even, were to try and teach me how to carve I should feel inclined to go and do something else. On the whole there has not been much subjection in my life.

O Jesus, to think that you should take



such trouble to help me! I am not worth it all, Lord, but I will try to profit by all your love and care. Ah, give me Mary's grace to listen to your words and ponder them in my heart. How little I have had there hitherto except self! Let me find room for you. You were subject to your own creature for me; I will try and be subject to your priest at least for you.

Ah, let me grow in wisdom to see you, dear Lord, in all things, and to obey you in all those who may help me to grow in grace. Let me, dear Lord, make up for the want of growth so far by a fresh start.

*Aspiration.*—Be subject to all men for God's sake.

## XIV

## The Death of St Joseph

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER our Lord returned to Nazareth, He came more fully under the influence of St Joseph, and He loved him most tenderly; but as He drew near to the time of His missionary life, He saw well to give St Joseph rest. It was necessary that our Lord should stand by Himself. St Joseph's work was done till the Church should be founded. This foundation was to be our Lord's own work. Thus our Lord told St Joseph that his death was at hand, and with all filial affection He prepared him for it, and with our Lady's help closed his eyes and took his soul to remain for a short time in Limbo. Because St Joseph was prepared by our Lord Himself for his death he has been ever since the patron of a happy death.

*Facts in my own Life*

God has given me a work to do, and when I have done it or hopelessly failed to do it He will take me from this world. What that work is I cannot tell, and therefore I do not know when He will take me. It is absolutely necessary that I should be prepared if I wish to die well. I shall not be properly prepared as long as I have a dread of death which prevents me from thinking calmly about it. I will ask St Joseph to help me to overcome this dread.

O Jesus, I thank you for giving me this lesson ; I require it very much. How good of you to let St Joseph die, that I might see the beauty of a holy death, and the comfort of a death at which you and your blessed mother assist. What has made me so frightened of death is that I think only of what I shall lose by it ; I think only of myself. Grant that I may think less of myself and more of you. Give me grace to learn how sweet it is to die in peace and in your sacred arms.

My dear mother Mary and my holy patron St Joseph, teach me to accustom myself to the thought of death. Be with me in that hour, and with you bring your son.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I die in peace in your blessed company.

## XV

## Our Lord's Parting from our Lady

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord was thirty years of age, the time determined at which He was to manifest Himself to men had arrived. So far He was known only as the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and known to very few. Now the special work of His life was to begin. Here again, as at that first manifestation in the Temple, He separates Himself from every human tie. Not that Mary would have hindered Him, but for our sakes, because our relations not unfrequently do hinder us in our work for God. For love of us and to encourage us to make sacrifices of affection, our Lord separates Himself from His Mother.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE been buried in my own family. If Almighty God were to make it plain to me that it was His will that I should separate myself from my home, I should, I hope, do so, but I should take it very hard ; I should be very glad if I were told that I need not do so. It is not that I am attached to any individual member, so that if it were for my own ease, or comfort, or benefit, I should not hesitate, but for God's work I should feel inclined to argue the matter and seek for reasons why it was not proper or good that I should leave my home. I feel inclined to put home first. It may be that there will be some work for God which will necessitate home taking the second place.

O Jesus, I thank you for showing me the truth that if you require this sacrifice from me I shall be unfaithful if I do not make it. Mary, my mother, teach me to give up for your Son's sake even my life if it be necessary, my affections if called upon. I have

become attached to one or two who have been kind to me; grant me courage, Lord, to bravely give up these attachments if you call upon me to do so. I do not wish to be a hindrance to your work in any way. Let me learn also to help others to bear partings which are inevitable; give me strength not to make them more painful than is necessary by breaking down and allowing myself to be weak when I could by my strength be a help to others.

My dear mother Mary, you knew you were letting your son go forth to rejection, torment and death, but I cannot think of you as hindering Him in any way or making His work more painful. Obtain for me the same courage.

*Aspiration.*—All for Jesus!

## XVI

## Our Lord's Baptism by St John

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord presented Himself to St John to be baptized, St John made a difficulty. He said it was more fitting that he himself should receive baptism from our Lord. But our Lord wished to show us that it was not wise to stand always on our rights. He wished to give us an example of humility, and at the same time to show us how to recognize the office of those who are really below us. His humility was rewarded by His Father, for the heavens opened and a voice was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE always found it difficult to humble myself, not that I do not believe in the good



of humility, but I shrink from doing anything which shows a humble spirit ; I dislike being "taken down." I do not care to ask anyone to do things for me, even my own people, for fear of being beholden to them.

O Jesus, how kind you are to me, humbling yourself for my sake, correcting me by your example ! I am so loth to suffer humiliation, and yet do you not teach me, Lord, that it is only by means of humiliation that I can follow you ? You do not ask me to do anything which will bring ridicule on me, though you did not shrink from ridicule yourself. You only ask me not to be so careful to avoid a little slight, not to be so afraid of a little word which may give my pride a wound.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me meek and humble of heart.

## XVII

Jesus was led by the Spirit into  
the Desert*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER He had been baptized, our Lord went into a desert place to prepare Himself by prayer for His public work. He did not require preparation, but, as was His custom, He was thinking of me. He, the God of all providence, needed no time for preparation, but those who were to come after Him, who were to continue His work, were to seek calmness of mind and strength of purpose where alone it can be obtained—in prayer. So all through His life our Lord, emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant, would always take time to pray, and in order that He might pray with less distraction from without, He so often retired into a

desert place. In this instance, as the work He was beginning was very great, He added fasting to His prayer.

*Facts in my own Life*

I VERY seldom think it necessary to prepare for my work for God. I have not been used by our Lord in His work as much as I might have been, because the work was likely to suffer from my want of preparation. My Lord was always ready to answer any call made by His Father. He teaches me in this place that if I am to be fit, I must prepare myself by prayer and by self restraint.

O Jesus, how kind you are to me! How patient with me in my negligence! I do want to be used by you in your work. I cannot be of much use to you, dear Lord, but I do wish at least to follow you. I know well that you have given me this call, even though you have not shown me very plainly what else you wished me to do for you. Give me the grace to listen to your call. Give me the strength to persevere in my

prayer and my self-restraint, that in your good time I may do something for you. I know it must be very little for I am so weak, but let me be ready for that little. I see now, Lord, I can do nothing unless I rely on your strength, the strength you give me in prayer.

*Aspiration.*—I will follow Thee, Lord ; only show me the way.

## XVIII

## The Temptations of our Lord

## The First Temptation

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER His baptism our Lord retired into the desert and fasted for forty days. The devil came to Him and tempted Him to exert His power in order to supply Himself with food: "Command that these stones be made bread." Our Lord knew that many who would love Him would be tempted in the matter of meat and drink, and He would suffer the same temptation to let them know that they do not lose His favour by such temptations, and also to show them how to overcome them. Always thinking of me, He remembers what may be a difficulty to me, and He gives me the lesson: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God";

and in another place : "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

*Facts in my own Life*

How much I have to accuse myself of in this matter ! How eager I am for food ! How nice in the selection ! I am inclined to eat and drink, not because I need food, but because it is within my reach ; I am tempted to take more than is good for me, and sometimes what I know does not agree with me. I scarcely require to be tempted on this point ; I give way so easily. Then after living in this unmortified way, perhaps for years, I read of the long fasts and penances of the saints, and I lose heart ; or I have tried a mortification which was beyond my strength. Whether immortified or self-mortified, I have been in the wrong.

O Jesus, how good and kind of you to endure this temptation for my sake ! I do wish, dear Lord, to act according to your will. I may not be allowed to fast, but let me know what you would have me to do in

other ways. At least I can be less particular in the choice of food ; at least I may restrain myself by not taking food which I know from experience is not good for me.

I know you will be good to me, dear Lord, in this, as in so many other things you have been good to me ! Would that I might do some little for you. Teach me to keep myself in hand by thinking of you and your words : “ Not in bread alone doth man live.”

*Aspiration.*—To do the will of Him that sent me.

## XIX

## The Second Temptation

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord had conquered the first temptation, the devil assailed Him at once with another. This time he began by flattery, as He thought he could in this way persuade our Lord to presumption. Of course it would have been no presumption if our Lord had followed the devil's advice, for at His will He could have raised Himself from the streets to the pinnacle of the temple, and, without any aid from the angels, have returned to the streets again without any exertion of His body. He would not do it, because He was thinking of me, and He knew that I should be assailed by many suggestions of the devil which I could not follow without presumption. Therefore He here gives me the answer to presumptuous



thoughts: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

*Facts in my own Life*

AH me, how often and how foolishly have I presumed on the mercy of God! I have put myself in danger of a fall, relying on the strength of my character, on the supposed purity of my motive. I have gone into company that was dangerous. I have trusted myself to read books which I have been warned against, saying to myself that they would do me no harm. I have been careless about venial sins sometimes, though I knew that such carelessness was the usual preliminary to mortal sins. I have presumed, not so much on the mercy of God as on my own strength, and God has now and again let me learn how weak that strength was. In His love of me He has taught me this lesson.

O Jesus, I thank you for your condescension in allowing Satan to tempt you in this way. You allowed him to molest you, Lord,

because you wished me to learn from you how to deal with him. Shall I ever learn to know the voice of the tempter, and be prompt to answer him in your words? O Jesus, I can never come very near to you till I am more careful and more fearful of a fall than I have been. Deign to teach me. Give me of your divine carefulness; give me of your divine promptness. Guard me from myself, for I know the devil can never harm me unless I myself allow him.

*Aspiration.*—I will not tempt the Lord my God.

## XX

## The Third Temptation

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE devil had no sooner been repulsed than he returned with another temptation. He suggested that as he had so much power over men he would be able to give our Lord many kingdoms, and that as he had so much power the little service he demanded was not unreasonable: "If falling down thou wilt adore me." There is no hesitation in our Lord's answer: "Begone, Satan, for it is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" In the other temptations, when Satan had suggested actions which would show only His folly if our Lord had performed them in the spirit suggested by Satan, our Lord simply met the suggestion and suffered the tempter to remain; but when, as now, He

was tempted to an action which would have been disloyal to His Father, He drives the devil away in confusion.

*Facts in my own Life*

AM me, is it not true that I am much more anxious to avoid what will bring me into ridicule than what will bring religion and the honour due to God into disrepute? If a companion of mine were to tempt me to gluttony or to drunkenness, or to doing something which would cause men to stare at me, I should not allow the suggestion for a moment. But if the suggestion is not to go to church, not to take up some devotion honourable to God, or to show some disrespect to God's minister, am I so ready to repel the temptation? I am afraid not. Raise a laugh against me and I am in arms at once: raise a laugh against Catholic practices or against some too earnest priest or nun or companion, and I am ready to join in the laugh.

O Jesus, I thank you for submitting your-

self to these temptations for my sake. It was for my sake that you let the devil overreach himself, as he did when he suggested that you should for a promise of temporary power forget your Father. I have so often been willing, not indeed to adore the devil but to put up with him in order to get into a fashionable set, to have my name in the papers along with Satan's friends. I have been content to be taken for one that did not belong to you, Lord, one not of your body, which is the Church. How good of you to show me my folly! I do beg pardon, Lord!

O my God, I have had my idols in the past; I will adore only you in the future. Give me strength to bear even ridicule for you. Give me strength to stand up at once for you.

*Aspiration.*—Thee only, Lord, I will adore.

## XXI

## The Ministry of the Angels

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE angels must have been very near our Lord all through His life, yet only on this occasion is there mention of their ministry to Him. Why was this? It was not because they could give Him anything which He had not of His own power. It was not as if He had need of comfort, for He is the "God of all consolation," as St Paul calls Him. It could not be to satisfy any need of His, for He is the God of all, and everything was His own to be used at His will. No, it was not for Himself but for us that we are told the angels ministered to Him. He had vanquished the evil one; He had driven him away; He had repelled all his temptations. But He thought of poor fearing me,

who am never sure that I have quite conquered, never sure that I have not taken his stones as if they were bread, or that I have listened too long to the presumptuous thoughts he suggested, or that I have been quite loyal to my God. The angels came and ministered to Him, to let me know that even while I am in the very heat of temptation they are not far from me ; that I only have to cry out, and they will help me.

*Facts in my own Life*

I GET so down-hearted after temptation ; I bear up while I am in actual conflict, but afterwards, when the devil has left me, the distress comes upon me—"Have I been firm, quite firm? Has my weakness amounted to disloyalty? Have I lost God's grace?" I fancy I could get out of myself a little if only I could rely on someone else ; I should have courage, I should be less cast down.

O Jesus, how good of you it was to let the angels come and minister to you, though you did not need them ! You allowed it,

Lord, for my sake; it was my temptation you were thinking of my weakness you wished to make into strength; my faint heart you wished to comfort. Help me, Lord, when in trouble, to remember your angels and take courage.

And you, my good guardian angel, whisper to me when the tempter would have me dwell too long or too greedily on my food; whisper to me, "Not by bread alone does man live"; and when the evil one would suggest that I should presume on God's mercy or on my own strength, do you whisper in my ear: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When he tempts me to vainglory or to guilty ambition, or foolish boasting, do you remind me, "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve," and in God's strength I shall be strong and drive the evil tempter away from me, and be consoled and no longer troubled.

*Aspiration.*—My good angel guardian, enlighten and protect me.



## XXII

## The Marriage Feast at Cana

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord began His ministry by working this great miracle. It was in pity to the poor people who had not provided sufficient wine for the feast, and in answer to our Lady's request. What actually took place was that, as soon as our Lady saw the need of the friends who had invited her, she simply told our Lord, and then gave to the waiters the only advice that is recorded of her in the Gospel. Seeing from our Lord's look that He was going to give His divine help, she said to the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." The incident was of common occurrence among the poor. I, no doubt, should have been disgusted, and have called attention to the folly of the people who had invited more than they could pro-

perly entertain. Our Lady's first thought was to help them, and she went the most direct way about it.

*Facts in my own Life*

WITH my friends I should probably act in the same way, that is, I should try not to expose their want of providence; but with acquaintances only, perhaps I should not be so particular—I should point out that, with proper care, such a thing would not happen. I should not have thought of our Lady's way. It would be something to laugh over afterwards. Now I may see what is the first law of kindness—never to think what amusement I can get out of my neighbour's mistakes, but how I can save them from feeling the result of their folly or wrong-doing. I have usually been quite satisfied with saying: "It serves him or her right; they should have been more careful." I should never think of asking our Lord to come to their assistance to save them from the annoyance of failure

O Jesus, I thank you for showing me

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your and your blessed mother's way of acting in these circumstances. Pardon me for so seldom trying to spare people from the effects of their mistakes. I see it is your will that I should always think first what is the kindest thing I can do, and then rely on you to help me to do it. I have so often been negligent and selfish. Let me learn kindness from you and from your blessed mother.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me kind and thoughtful for others.

## XXIII

## The Marriage Feast at Cana

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE wine fails; our Lady asks for an intervention of divine power in order to save the young people from a small disgrace. Our Lord grants her request. Then she gives the only piece of advice that is preserved for us in the Gospel. She turns to the waiters and says to them: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." They act on her counsel, and in a few moments the water is changed into wine. So it is our Lady's office and her delight to do little services for us, and it is her Son's delight to give us favours through her.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE practically excluded the events of my every-day life from my prayers. They

are too trivial, I think ; they are so small that it does not seem proper to mention them in my prayers. I like to pray for bigger things—for conversions, for success in some important matter, etc.

O Jesus, it is kind of you to think of me when you are working such a great miracle. You wished to let me see, dear Lord, how I might appeal to you in quite ordinary difficulties. The wine wanted was very cheap, and they might have procured some from a neighbour, but you wished to let me see that you are always on the look out for occasions of kindness, and that you are always ready whenever your mother asks you to do as she requests. Teach me, Lord, to turn to you through Mary at all times. Make me love you so much that my first thought will be to turn to you in every difficulty. Be kind to me always, dear Lord, and to all who are kind to me. Make me kind to all for your sake.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me always kind.

## XXIV

## The Calling of the Disciples

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

Two of John the Baptist's disciples were talking with him a few days after the temptations when our Lord passed by, and John said, pointing to our Lord: "Behold the Lamb of God." Andrew and John heard the words, and immediately went up to our Lord and asked Him where He lived. Jesus said to them: "Come and see"; and He walked with them and stayed talking to them till it was night. Andrew told the good news to his brother Peter; and John, no doubt, told his own relation, James, though in his Gospel he says nothing of what he did, but only tells us of Andrew's zeal. The next day Jesus was walking and talking with the four who had joined Him, when they met Philip, and Jesus said to

him, "Follow me," and Philip joined them. He told Nathaniel, who, after a little conversation with our Lord, joined the disciples; in like manner the rest were called and followed.

*Facts in my own Life.*

I too, whoever I may be, have been called by God to help Him in His work. He may not have asked me to do much, but still it is His work. If He has not given me a very definite call, he has, at least, asked me to follow Him. I have paid very little attention to His call; I have been afraid that to follow Him might mean more than I wished to do or to give; I have feared that He might ask too much of me. I see now how I ought to be ready whenever and for whatever He asks me. Ah me, how negligent I have been! I cannot expect that He will use me at all if I am not more prompt to do His work than I have been hitherto.

O Jesus, how backward I am in zeal! I will try to do better in future. How kind it

is of you to give me another chance ! O my Lord, I hope no one has suffered through my want of effort. I will come and see you where you dwell in the Blessed Sacrament as often as I can. I will follow you wherever you lead me. I will try in your work to forget myself and think only of what I can do for you. I will try my best, without ostentation, to do good and bring joy to others.

*Aspiration.*—I will follow Thee, Lord.



## XXV

## The Life at Capharnaum

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

IMMEDIATELY after the marriage feast at Cana our Lord and His mother, His relations and His disciples, went from Nazareth, where His home had been, to Capharnaum. He Himself did not remain long, but after a few days He went through the towns and villages of Galilee on His first missionary journey.

At Capharnaum He would meet a larger concourse of people than at Nazareth, and there He left His mother. He would experience the inconvenience of changes, the inconvenience of a strange house. He took His mother to a small house near the edge of the lake, and the holy women, her relations, no doubt, accompanied her. Always thoughtful for the comfort of His mother,

He foresaw what would happen when the men of Nazareth turned against Him, and our Lady would be freer from molestation at Capharnaum. In a larger town she would be really more private and more secluded than in the little hill town, every member of which knew her. Again, He would be much more frequently with her at Capharnaum.

*Facts in my own Life*

So many things which concern the joy of those I live with are not considered by me of much consequence. I do indeed consult with them, but I feel that it is mostly for my own sake, to save annoyance to myself afterwards, than from any very great desire of consulting their wishes or their comfort.

O Jesus, I do thank you for your kindness to our Lady, your mother and mine. How many nights did you spend with her even when most busy with your preaching, telling her all that was in your heart! Ah, how little I tell even you, dear Lord, of the things I am interested in! I have so little,

except myself, to talk about. I will strive to follow you here also. I can tell you of no effort I have made for others. I can only tell you of my want of effort. I know, dear Lord, that you are even now going about doing good in the towns and villages. I have been so little interested in your work. Do, dear Lord, if it is your will, let me help, at least, let me not stand in your way in my own case. Help me that I may help your work in my own little way.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me all Thine, and then use me as Thou wilt.

## XXVI

## The Beginning of the Preaching

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as our Lord had attended to the comfort of His mother at Capharnaum He began to go about preaching. The first subject of His discourses was penance, as though continuing the teaching of St John the Baptist : " Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand." In His preaching, though He always spoke as a master, our Lord constantly appealed to the Scriptures and to the holy men of the Jews, and so He was not averse from appearing as a disciple of St John the Baptist, though St John himself said " I ought rather to be baptized by Thee," and he might have said " I am Thy disciple." Our Lord, as usual, was not thinking about Himself but about me, who find it so hard to continue another's work.

*Facts in my own Life*

I FIND it very difficult to take up another person's work. If I am called upon to do so I begin by showing the faults in the work before it came into my hands. I want to make a fresh start, to belittle what has been done, and to magnify what I have done. I try to give the impression that nothing had been done before I began. In many instances I know that I could do nothing unless the way had been made smooth for me by those who have gone before me.

O Jesus, my own dear Master, how kind it is of you to let me see the pride I have been guilty of! How thoughtful of you to let me see you apparently taking up St John's work! It is good of you, Lord, to do this just for my sake. How shall I ever thank you enough for all your care of me? I will try to be less forward. I will try to sink myself and my own views more than I have done in the past. If only I could see your hand in other people's work as you saw your

Father's hand in St John's work, I could more easily follow and be less anxious to assert myself. I do wish to follow you and to help the work you have in hand, and in your strength to do your work, Lord.

*Aspiration.*—"Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand!"

## XXVII

## The Draught of Fishes

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord at once attracted great multitudes to Him, and one day, shortly after He had begun to preach at Capharnaum, the multitude pressed upon Him so that He got into Peter's boat and taught the crowd from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He told Peter to get into deeper water and let down his net. Peter had been fishing all night and had taken nothing, but at our Lord's word he did as he was told, and at once enclosed a very large number of fish, enough to fill his own ship and also that belonging to St James and St John, who were his partners. Peter at once recognized the power of our Lord and, fearing, fell on his knees, begging Him to leave him be-

cause He was not worthy to associate with such holiness. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Jesus answered: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

*Facts in my own Life*

I, too, have laboured many years, and seemingly with only partial success. I have trusted only to myself, and I have expected more from myself than I had any right to do. And now that our Lord has taken me more closely to Himself and given me His friendship I am just a little afraid that He may want too much of me, and I am inclined, with Peter, to hold back. I do not indeed ask our Lord to depart from me, but I have seen so little profit so far that I want to know where He is taking me and what He expects of me. I am afraid He may ask me something very hard.

O my own dear Master, I can trust you; at least, I want to trust you wholly. How good you have been to me to show me how



others, even great saints, have been afraid to follow! If you had left Peter then, and taken him at his word, what a wreck he would have made of his life! Give me the grace, like him, to leave all and follow you. You do not ask me, dear Lord, to leave much, only my own will, my own way; but do let me learn your will and your way, and then give me the courage of St Peter to follow it always. Thus only can I expect to do good to myself and others; thus only can I catch souls for you.

*Aspiration.*—“Leaving all things they followed Him.”

## XXVIII

## Our Lord drives the Money-changers out of the Temple

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

VERY early in His missionary life our Lord went up to Jerusalem to keep the Pasch. When He went into the Temple He found the outer courts crowded with oxen and sheep, etc., and those who sold these things. They were there for the convenience of those who came to offer sacrifice or to make other offerings in the Temple. Offerings of this kind could be redeemed at a price fixed in the law. The money had to be offered in the old Jewish coinage, hence it was a convenience to have money-changers in attendance. Our Lord saw that these men, both those who sold animals and the money-changers, were trying to make a profit out

of His service, and twisting some cords into a lash, He drove them out of the Temple.

*Facts in my own Life*

I ALSO have been ready to make a profit out of my service of God—not perhaps a money profit, but profit in those things which men value even more than money. If our Lord were to search my thoughts, He would find more care for the good opinion of my friends and neighbours than for His service. I like those who are about me to get the impression that I frequent church, that I live an orderly life for the best and the highest of motives ; but our Lord knows me as I am. He sees my anxiety to be thought well of. In other words, I am making a profit, not for my soul and for eternity, but for myself here out of my work which is apparently good.

O Jesus, spare me ; do not visit me with stripes, for I am so weak, but teach me gently in your own sweet way how I may put every other motive but your love out of

my heart. Your house is a house of prayer in which my heart and my mind, leaving all other things, should be fixed on you alone. My prayers and my work must be to you and for you. Drive all other motives and all thoughts of self-seeking from my heart, that I may offer you daily a clean oblation of myself.

*Aspiration.*—My Jesus, I will do all for love of Thee.

## XXIX

## Jesus distrusted them

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE strong action of our Lord in driving these self-seekers out of the Temple attracted much attention, and many, St John tells us, believed in Him; "but He did not trust Himself to them, for He knew all men"; and again, "He knew what was in man."

Here our Lord is letting me see at the very beginning of His work what I have found out after many years—not to trust myself to my fellows. Jesus, after much training His disciples, did trust Himself to them; but how terribly they disappointed His trust! Our Lord knew what was in men, both the good and the evil, the strength and the weakness. These men whom He did not trust were attracted by

His miracles; those whom He did afterwards trust had left that selfish love of the wonderful and had settled down to steady daily constant effort for Him and for His work.

*Facts in my own Life*

I HAVE never trusted others very much. I find it really hard to tell my thoughts and my inner feelings even to my God, whom I do wish to trust. But the question with me now is whether I am going about the right way to get my Lord and Master to trust Himself to me. He has been very kind to me, and has shown Himself in a way I never saw Him before. How can I keep His trust? There is only one way, and that is to root out self from all I do.

O Jesus, make me worthy of your trust. It is what my heart yearns for. It is your love that I want. Do not let me keep to the old way of burying myself in myself and trusting no one. Let me open my heart to trust you and rely on you, so that you, Lord, may trust yourself to me.

## XXX

## Nicodemus comes to our Lord

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHILE our Lord was in Jerusalem for the Pasch, Nicodemus, a ruler, that is, one of the ruling class among the Jews, came to our Lord. He had been struck by what he had heard about our Lord, and he came to inquire. Nicodemus came at night so that his visit might be secret. Our Lord does not yet trust him because he comes attracted by the miracles ; still he goes a little beyond those who thought only of the miracles : " No man can do these things unless he is of God "—so he comes to inquire. Our Lord graciously instructs him in the sacrament of Baptism, in the duty of faith, and in the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of God's love for man. Lastly, He tells him : " He that doth truth cometh to the light," that

is, one who deliberately and firmly does what he knows to be right will be certain to be rewarded by the gift of faith and of light which will explain all things. How kind our Lord is with him! He does not trust him yet, but afterwards when he has lived a few more years and tried to gain our Lord's trust, he is rewarded, and is mentioned as one of the disciples after the Resurrection.

*Facts in my own Life*

PERHAPS I have met with opportunities of instructing, or at least of giving some advice to those who were seeking the truth, but I have held back from speaking to them through motives of human respect—I have not dared to reason with people cleverer than myself. Or it may have been that I did not care to give the time and trouble to this work for God. I hope I have not allowed any one to abuse my faith in my presence, but I have sometimes neglected these chances of doing good by my want of care and tact.



O my Jesus, I thank you for letting me see how I may, quietly and without fuss, do good to any that ask me questions about religion. I will get them to think for themselves ; to read useful books ; to pray for light to know the truth and your will in their regard. Jesus, help me to bring others to the light as you brought Nicodemus.

Give me grace to walk in the truth myself, and to do the truth always as I know it, that I may have light for my own soul and then help others to you.

## XXXI

## Our Lord and St John the Baptist

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord began to preach and to baptize, some of St John's admirers came to tell him of the great success which attended our Lord's preaching. They, no doubt, fancied that St John would make greater efforts to draw back to himself some of those who had left him to follow our Lord. They were very much mistaken. St John knew his place, and was not going to do anything to hinder our Lord's influence, but rather he wished to do all in his power to further it. "He must increase, but I must decrease," was the answer he gave to the suggestions of his followers. It is proper that, when the real king comes, the ambassador steps down and takes his ordinary rank.

*Facts in my own Life*

THE reason why I have not succeeded as I might have done in my work for God has been precisely that I never quite forgot myself; I must not decrease in the esteem of others; I must not get any rebuff, or I will not continue the work. Though I have scarcely recognized this myself because I have not been clear-sighted enough to see it, no doubt others have seen my selfishness. I have lost occasions of doing good in a humble, quiet way, just as St John would have lost his grace of martyrdom if he had not been so humble. How easy it would be for me to bring a little joy into the lives of others, not by interfering, but by trying to be kind to all for God's sake; not by being anxious to do great things, but by being contented to do the small and unimportant things, for which I shall get no praise, but for which only God will get honour!

O Jesus, how your saints shame me!

I thank you, dear Lord, for letting me see my forwardness, and for recalling me to my proper place. Give me grace to learn the lesson of St John's life. I am willing, Lord, to decrease, to become as nothing, if only as nothing you will use me for your service. I am in your hands; do with me as you will. Keep me near you, dear Lord, worthless though I am.

*Aspiration.*—To be kind to all for God's sake.

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*President General of the English Congregation  
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# Simple Meditations

on

## the Life of our Lord

Second Series

I

### Jesus at the Well of Samaria

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

ON His way from Judea to Galilee Jesus did not, as was customary, go on the east bank of the Jordan, crossing again just below Capharnaum, but He went straight through Samaria. One day, wearied with walking, He stopped near the town of Sichar at a well made by the patriarch Jacob, and there He had a conversation with a woman who came to draw water. He led her gradually to give Him her confidence, and then made use of her to bring her neighbours to Him ; and He made many converts. The woman herself

was of no repute, but the manifestation of Himself which our Lord was pleased to make to her changed her from a careless, sinful woman into an apostle.

*Facts in my own Life*

How careless I have been of spreading the kindness of my Lord among my neighbours ! By God's grace I have not been so careless as was this woman before our Lord took her in hand, but this was owing to His grace only.

I have been afraid of a word of rebuff or of a thoughtless laugh from some of my friends, and because of my fear I have often neglected to attract others to our Lord by kindness and consideration. Perhaps I have rather repelled my acquaintance by my too great strictness and harshness. I hope no poor lax soul has been kept from becoming a friend of my Lord by my want of kindness.

O Jesus, kind and gentle Master, I thank you for remembering me when you were so

tired. How gently you won this erring soul and made her bring others to you! Teach me your ways. Be gentle with me, dear Lord. You have been so kind in the past in so many ways; be kind to me now and teach me to bring your kindness into my daily life. I see now that you wish me to war against the carelessness of my friends and acquaintances more by kindness than by harshness. Teach me still more of your way, and grant me yet more grace that I may not forget the example you have given me. Save me, dear Lord, from a harsh and forbidding manner in your service, and make me always kind and gentle as you were, my Lord and my God.

*Aspiration.*—Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.

## The Sermon at Sichar

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN the disciples returned from buying food in the town, they found Jesus talking with the woman at the well. As soon as she had gone they brought Him the food and asked Him to eat, but He refused; and when they wondered, He said to them: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." The disciples had taken a great deal of trouble to get food, and they thought that our Lord must do as they wished; but He would not eat. He wished to teach them a lesson at the very beginning of their time of training—a lesson which would be of much use to them later. After He was gone they would each be more or less independent.

They would rule one of the Churches to be founded by them, and they must be taught at once that it was not their will which had to be done, but the will of Him who sent them.

*Facts in my own Life*

God in His mercy has shown me what the obstacle has been which has prevented me from loving and serving Him as I ought. Left to myself, I naturally go my own way and do my own will. I see now that I must put aside for ever this barrier of self-seeking, of self-love.

O Jesus, my Lord, give me the grace to know your will! Let me be as wax in your hand, that you may impress your sweet will upon me. Help me to cast aside my own will and to seek only yours. Make me constant, so that it may be the meat and drink of my soul; and let me seek nothing, crave for nothing, enjoy nothing, which is contrary in the slightest degree to your will. Jesus, my beginning and my last end,

I will try to conform myself to your holy will in all things ; in your mercy do not ask me to do anything very difficult till by your grace I may be able to do your holy will with all thoroughness.

*Aspiration.*—Not my will, but Thine be done.



## III

## The Healing of the Ruler's Son

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

THIS poor man heard that our Lord had returned from Jerusalem; and finding his son at the point of death and getting no help from the doctors, he made up his mind to seek this new Teacher who had made Himself so famous by the wonders He had worked in Jerusalem. He set out from Capharnaum and met with our Lord just as He was entering Cana in Galilee. He simply made his request that our Lord would come down and heal his son. Our Lord put him off at first, but when the ruler persevered, saying: "Lord, come down before that my son die," Jesus assured him, and sent him home believing.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have been discouraged when my prayer was not granted at once. Perhaps my requests have sometimes been quite as unreasonable as was that of this ruler. Our Lord had had a long walk and was, no doubt, tired, yet the ruler wished Him to go at once another fourteen miles to Capharnaum. Do not I ask things quite as unreasonable? And how little do I really trust in our Lord! I must see instances of His intervention or I do not think of praying to Him—not that I doubt His power to help me, but I want to have my faith roused before I can remember to turn to Him at once in my difficulties.

O Jesus, how kind it is of you thus to teach me how to pray! I will try to-day, at least, to call upon you, no matter how trivial my difficulties may be. Teach me, dear Lord, to be reasonable in my demands from you. How little I have thought of your will in my prayers and petitions!

Let me learn to leave the answer to my prayers in your hands. Be good to me, Lord, and do not let me lose heart when you seem not to hear me. I know you are listening to me, Lord, always ; let me be content with that, for I know also that you will surely answer my prayers in your own time.

*Aspiration.*—Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

## IV

## Jesus teaching in the Synagogue

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WE constantly meet the phrase with which St. Luke describes our Lord's teaching: "He taught with power"—that is, He taught as one who knew what He was teaching. Our Lord had a very direct way of teaching, suited to the simple people whom He was instructing. St. Paul tells us the difference between our Lord's teaching and that of the other teachers of the Jews. He says He did not teach, "*it is and it is not,*" but "*it is was in Him.*" The scribes were for the most part disputing whether a certain doctrine were true or not, therefore they failed to teach anything positively; but our Lord knew, and therefore taught in a direct way. This was the reason of His

power. Again, He was always anxious that those who heard His instructions should profit by them; He was not seeking praise for Himself but their good.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have a way of being rather positive in anything I have to teach, but not for the same reason as our Lord; it is not because I know, but because I think that I know, when I really may be wrong. And this has not been the chief fault of my teaching but rather that I have looked for praise, instead of for the good of those I had to teach. I can see what an amount of influence for good I have lost in this way. How much more I might have done for God had I not been so self-seeking!

O Jesus, my own dear Master, teach me also with power, and make something of me even at this hour! Pardon me, Lord, for my blindness and weakness. I see now it has always been myself that has been my chief hindrance in your service. Take me

into your own chosen company, that I may learn of you how to walk. Teach me to trust no longer to myself, to work no more for myself, but, leaning on you, to work for you always.

*Aspiration.*—Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

## V

## Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

IMMEDIATELY after leaving the synagogue our Lord went into Peter's house and there found Peter's wife's mother sick of a fever. Peter and his relations besought Him to heal her. Jesus standing over her took her by the hand and commanded the fever, and it left her. She, as soon as she found herself well again, rose up and ministered to our Lord and His disciples. Up to this He had for the most part made difficulties about working miracles, but in the present case He at once healed this good woman. He did this so promptly, partly for Peter's sake; partly for the sake of the disciples who needed the food that she had, no doubt, often prepared for them; and partly for the pleasure which this ministry would bring to

the good woman herself. He could quite as easily have entertained the whole company without her help, but He wished to show me that it is a kindness to let others do what I can do myself perhaps better than they.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am often putting others aside and doing what I think I can do well, rather than letting them have the pleasure of doing it themselves. I tell myself if I see a pained look, that I can do the thing better than others, and that they ought not to be aggrieved. Still I know well that I feel hurt if any one takes work out of my hands. I may well believe that it is not always a kindness to prevent another from doing what I perhaps could do better. At least, I can see how my Lord acted. It would have brought great credit to Him if He had miraculously provided a suitable feast for the disciples, but it was Peter's mother-in-law's proper duty, and he would not rob her of the pleasure of providing the whole enter-



tainment. I am afraid I should not have looked at the matter in that way.

O Jesus, kind and thoughtful Master, I thank you for this lesson! I must often have spoiled the pleasure of others by my habit of trying to do everything myself. Especially in my intercourse with children I have been to blame in this way.

It is a great secret that you teach me, Lord, and I will try to bear it in mind. You are good to let me know it. Teach me yet more to think of the joy and the pleasure of others and less of myself. I see now, Lord, for you yourself show it me, how I can rejoice in the joy of another and give pleasure simply by interfering as little as I can. I shall get less praise, Lord, but they will have more pleasure.

*Aspiration.*—Kind Jesus, teach me your own kind way always.

## VI

## Our Lord heals Many

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE same evening after sunset they brought the sick with all kinds of diseases to Him. "But He, laying His hands on every one of them, healed them." The whole city was aroused with the fame of our Lord's miracles, and we can gain an idea of His kindness from the fact that even after a long and tiring day He did not refuse to lay His hands on all. He did not, as He might so easily have done, make excuses and heal just a few of the worst cases, but He went to the door and with great trouble and no little fatigue He put His sacred hands on each of them and healed them.

*Facts in my own Life*

The "many" are just those I take no interest in and will not trouble about. I am ready to do anything for those who are attached to me, but I try to avoid any work for the many. I give my prayers freely to my relatives and friends, but I do not consider I am called upon to give ever so small a prayer for the many. I give a great deal of kind thought to my special friends, but it does not strike me to excuse the faults of my acquaintances and others, or to think of them as anything but necessary evils.

O Jesus, how you shame me by your kindness to all! You, dear Lord, made no exceptions. I thank you for showing me your way. I shall have many difficulties in following your example. I have always preferred to choose the hard things I would do for you, but here you have shown me something difficult, and yet it is much more in your way than anything I should have

chosen. Teach me, dear Lord, to be kind to all. I do not wish to be less kind to my friends, but more kind to yours. How much of self has been mixed up with the little good I may have done! Give me strength to imitate you in your care and trouble for the many.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, help me to be kind to all for your sake.

## VII

## Jesus stills the Storm

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord's first journey had brought Him to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He entered into a boat and His disciples followed, and Jesus lay down in the boat. He was tired, for He had been curing the sick at Capharnaum in Peter's house during the first part of the night. He had risen early and gone out to a lonely place to pray; He had been wandering with His disciples all day. And as He slept a great storm arose. Then His disciples came and awakened Him, saying: "Lord, save us; we perish." And Jesus said to them: "Why are ye fearful, oh ye of little faith?" Then rising up, He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. They were

quite safe, but our Lord wished to inspire confidence in their hearts that He would not abandon them.

*Facts in my own Life*

Have I ever doubted our Lord? Perhaps I cannot remember. But then I have never been in a storm when He has been asleep. Of course I have had my troubles, but perhaps I have never had any serious one. If any great trial should ever come upon me I must never forget my Lord and His love and care of me. He is always there, however tired He seems, and He must often be tired of me. I need not wait for a big storm to awaken Him when He seems to be leaving me to myself.

O Jesus! give me a great trust in you. The apostles had only just known you and they were afraid; but I have known you all my life. I have known your love and care of me, for you have given me so many proofs of it, dear Lord. Grant that I may never cease to trust you. Often in the past I have let

you sleep. I have forgotten you were near me, and have gone on in my own way as if I had power of myself to do your will and to gain heaven. I have too much need of you, not only to preserve me in storm, but to help me forward in the calm. Oh, how good you have been to me! Even in the storm you have not allowed me to be lost, for though I let you sleep, your heart was ever wakeful.

*Aspiration.*—Lord, save me, or I perish.

## VIII

## Our Lord and the Gerasenes

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as they came to land there met Him a man possessed by the devil. He had been out of his mind for a long time and dwelt naked in a cave, and was a terror to all near. As soon as Jesus came, the evil spirit in the man flung him down before Jesus, and cried out, begging not to be tormented. And when Jesus cast him out he begged to enter a herd of swine near, and Jesus allowed him ; and the herd of swine, under the influence of the evil one, ran violently into the sea and was stifled. Then the people came and in fear besought Jesus to leave their country. They were afraid that He might be asking too much of them if He began by letting the evil spirit destroy their swine in that way. Our Lord took



them at their word, and getting into the boat He returned to Capharnaum.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am often a little afraid of what our Lord may ask of me. Though I do not really think I should ever ask Him to go away, no matter what He took from me. I have become attached to some things, and it would be dreadful if any attachment could ever make me forget that God is first and must remain first in my heart.

O Jesus! I thank you for letting me see that your service is not always easy. I sometimes feel as if I should like to do something hard for you; but when you ask me, I may not have the courage to do as you wish. Teach me, dear Lord, how I may make myself ready. You know what a poor weak creature I am. Teach me not to give my heart to any person or thing that will prevent my keeping you, my one, true, abiding Friend. But if other love may be in you and for you, you know, Lord, how I

should thank you for it. Make me, then, careful of my heart. Let me not deceive myself, but always take care that I be not attached to anything except for your love and service. You have been good to me, Lord, be so always.

*Aspiration.*—All for Jesus !

## IX

## The Cure of the Demoniac

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN the crowd of Gerasenes came to our Lord, they found the poor demoniac sitting at our Lord's feet, clothed and in his right mind. As our Lord went down to the boat this poor man begged that he might stay with Him always. But Jesus sent him away, saying: "Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee." And he went through the whole city, publishing the great things Jesus had done for him. Our Lord would not let this man follow Him, to show us that not all who were worthy or who greatly desired to be in His chosen company were to be allowed to enter. There was work for all, and this man could do God's work better there,

where every one had witnessed his affliction, than by being taken about in His personal company.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have sometimes thought that there was nothing for me to do for God that was worth doing here where He has placed me. And yet I know that there is work to be done for God everywhere. I think that unless I am doing great and showy things my work is not worth doing. What God requires of me is to do the ordinary duties of my everyday life in as perfect a way as I can. If I am not called on to leave my home, surely I can find enough to do for Him in it by good example ; by kindness to those about me ; by giving up my own will to the pleasure of others, thus showing the effect of my striving to love and serve God, in all my dealings with my neighbour. If I neglect all this, and look only for what I call higher work, I may be leaving undone the very work God intends me to do for Him.

O Jesus! I thank you for this lesson. Help me to be faithful in these little things. I see now that when I have been dissatisfied with my plain and insignificant life, it is not you I have been seeking, but myself. Give me also the grace to go into my house to my friends and tell them of your mercy, not by any words, but by the kindness and charity of my life. Let me, dear Lord, bring your charity and your kindness into my own home. Pardon me, Lord, for all my forgetfulness in the past. Be with me and keep me in your love always.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, inflame my heart with Thy love.

## X

## The Healing of the Paralytic

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER the miracle on the coast of the Gerasenes, our Lord sailed back to Capernaum. No sooner was His return known than a great number of people came to Him to hear Him preach, and the house was soon thronged. Some men who were carrying a paralytic to our Lord to be healed could not get near to Him. One of the men suggested that they should get up on to the roof and let down the sick man into the room where Jesus was. Our Lord, seeing the poor man's good dispositions and willing to reward the faith and the earnestness of his friends, first forgave him his sins, and then, to convince some who questioned His power over sin, healed the sick man and sent him home carrying the mat on which he had been laid.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have found it difficult to show any great sympathy for strangers. For one or two of my friends I have felt deep sympathy when they have been in distress. In such a case I could, or I fancy I could, do anything for a few of my friends. But a stranger is little or nothing to me. I find it hard to rouse myself to do anything for him. Here I find our Lord showing the greatest sympathy and giving the greatest consideration to this unfortunate stranger. He always seems to forget Himself and think only of the man whose distress calls for His pity and His help. He might have found a number of excuses for refusing to assist him; I could find any number of excuses. How important, how pressing the men were! They might have waited outside the house till our Lord was able to come out; their methods of getting at Jesus were rough and ought not to be encouraged; our Lord had had a long and tiring day, and so on.

O Jesus, how kind of you to weary yourself just to show me how I ought to forget myself! Give me some little of your kind power of sympathy for all in distress. I see now, Lord, why you had such a power for good. You were always unselfish, always kind. No one could think of you as turning a poor man away because you had not time to attend to him. Teach me, dear Lord, to be kind and considerate to all who are in distress. I cannot always give anything except kind words and kind looks. Teach me to give these, not only to my friends, but to those numberless ones who have you only for their Friend. How different my life would have been, dear Lord, if I had learnt from you the gift of sympathy! Give me some little of that gift, Lord.

*Aspiration.*—Teach me to be kind to all for Thy sake.



## XI

## The Call of St. Matthew

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER the cure of the paralytic, our Lord went with His audience to the lake side and on His way passed the custom-house. There the publicans and the tax-gatherers were at work. Our Lord going up to these men picked out one of them, Levi, who was called Matthew, and simply said to him: "Follow Me." Immediately Matthew left his employment and followed our Lord. As a class these farmers of the taxes were despised and hated by the Jews; they were men of their own nation in the employ of the Roman conquerors. Even such men our Lord did not hesitate to join to Himself. St. Matthew never forgot the kindness our Lord had shown to him. He became a most faithful witness

of all the subsequent acts of our Lord's life, and has left us the account of all in his Gospel.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am inclined, like so many of those I associate with, to look upon all those who are below me socially as a class, and often I do not care to know anything about them. I have far too much of the world's regard for persons of rank and position. The rest outside my own family circle are to me roughs, or servants, or labourers. I see in this instance that our Lord does not look upon people in that way at all. Unlike the Jews, who condemned the whole class as publicans and sinners, He appreciates each single one. Of course He had means of knowing the individuals which I have not, but His actions warn me not to condemn any one because he is of such a class or profession. Our Lord always saw the good in each one. I must try to learn the same habit. There is good, or our Lord would not love all as He does.

O Jesus, I thank you for your kindness to St. Matthew and for your kindness also to me! You let me see, Lord, how you would have me look upon all with your kind eyes. I see it will be a long time before I shall be able to offer you a thoughtful kindness in all my judgements of those about me. I thank you, Lord, that you have prevented me from doing any wilful injury in this matter. I must not be content with that, but must strive with your help to see and to appreciate the good in all. If only I could see with your eyes, Lord! Let me at least study your life and learn your ways, so that I may become more and more like to you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto yours.

## XII

**The Feast at St. Matthew's House***Facts in our Lord's Life*

IN thanksgiving for the kindness of our Lord, St. Matthew invited Him and His disciples to his house and prepared a dinner for them. To meet our Lord, St. Matthew invited also a number of his own acquaintances, no doubt of his own class. The pharisees were shocked at our Lord's going, and asked why He consented to eat with publicans and sinners. Our Lord, hearing this question, said, "They that have health need not the physician, but they that are sick." What our Lord meant these pharisees to understand was that the acknowledgement of sin and repentance for it were necessary before His grace could work in the soul. These proud pharisees were self-justified; they considered they did not need assistance.

To all who own their need, our Lord is always ready to give His help.

*Facts in my own Life*

At times I feel rather satisfied with myself. I have thought myself better than many of those I come across. Not that I really think myself very good, God knows! I know I am very imperfect. Still I have had the thought that I would never get much better and that there was not much need of trying. Thus, though I hope I have not been a pharisee, I have been at such times more nearly related to the pharisees than to St. Matthew. I can own my faults and imperfections in general, but if it comes to owning myself wrong in some definite particular I find a difficulty in doing so. It hurts me to have my imperfections pointed out. If only I were sure that the correction were prompted by care for my welfare I could bear it more easily.

O Jesus! give me the grace to acknowledge my weakness and also the grace to be strong in overcoming myself. I will trust you,

Lord ; do you help me. I can be sure of your love which prompts every little trial to my pride. Let me see your love behind every correction I receive from those around me. Then I shall be willing to take it from every quarter. It is your way, dear Lord, to make me better and more worthy of you. I have resisted your kindness in the past. Grant me the grace to resist no longer, but to resign myself into your loving hands. Do to me as you will, only give me the grace to make the best of your kind care.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, strengthen me in faith, hope and charity.

## XIII

**The Disciples of John the Baptist***Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was leaving the table of St. Matthew, some disciples of St. John came, and asked Him the very personal question: "Why do the pharisees and the disciples of John fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast?" Our Lord answered that their time for fasting was not yet come, and then explained the true principle of all such austerities—that they must be suited to the individuals. You do not put new wine into old bottles, nor patch old cloth with a new, strong piece; but you put new wine, which has yet to ferment and stretch the skins in which it is contained, into skins that are capable of stretching; and new cloth must be sewn on to new cloth, and not on

to threadbare pieces, or the very strength of the new will make the worn parts more liable to tear.

*Facts in my own Life*

I sometimes think that those in authority are too easy with me when they refuse to allow me to fast or to take up other austerities. I know that I ought not to be the judge in these matters ; at the same time, I like to have my own way. Our Lord here teaches me that I must only take up such practices of mortification as are suited to me, and that I am quite safe if I follow the advice of my confessor.

O Jesus ! I will try to give up my own will in these things, for I know you have said that obedience is better than sacrifice. I know also that in my case obedience is not unfrequently sacrifice. Therefore, giving up my will to you in the person of those who have a right to advise me, I will try to be obedient, cheerfully and promptly. I am not worthy to do great things for you as did



so many of your saints ; make me more and more worthy. Give me cheerfulness in your service that I may follow you in the obedience with which you were obedient even unto death.

*Aspiration.*—“Not my will, but Thine be done.”

## XIV

**The Petition of Jairus***Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was talking and discussing with the disciples of St. John, a ruler of the synagogue came to Him in great distress and begged Him to come down to his house : "Lord, my daughter is even now dead, but come, lay Thy hand on her, that she may live." This profession of faith merited the immediate answer of our Lord's compliance : "Jesus rising up, followed him with His disciples." Our Lord saw that this was a case in which words would only weary the poor father. How differently He treated different people asking a favour from Him ! Some He put off two or three times, as the Syrophœnician woman ; some He instructed in the duty of faith, and purified their hearts

before granting their prayer, as the man who had a son sick at Capharnaum.

*Facts in my own Life*

I expect my prayers to be answered at once, and if they are not, I lose heart. If they are answered I take all the credit to myself, or I fail to thank God for His goodness to me. Then, again, with what hesitation I pray for some things! I see how simple and direct the prayer of this poor man was. He just told our Lord that he was in distress. He told Him what that distress was, and showed that he had the most complete confidence in our Lord's power to help him. I am often in distress; my soul is sick with anger, with hard judgment of others, and so on; and my impulse when this is the case is not to seek the gentle touch of our Lord's hand in Holy Communion, but to avoid it.

O Jesus! I see what you want of me. Give me the grace to do your will. I will not stay away from you, dear Lord, just

because I have been vexed or put out, but owning my fault, I will come to you and ask you to lay your kind hand on me. Teach me to trust you. Oh, how I have neglected you in my prayers! With what little faith and trust and persistence have I prayed! Give me grace to acknowledge your power and to rely on it. I know that you love me, and only desire me to ask you in order to grant all that I ask.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, strengthen my faith, my trust and my love.

## XV

## The Healing of the Woman

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was going to the house of Jairus, a woman of good standing who had suffered for twelve years from a troublesome complaint, came near Him in the crowd, and with great faith took hold of His cloak, for she said: "If I shall touch but the hem of His garment I shall be healed." And as soon as she had touched it she felt that she was healed; and though she would willingly have proclaimed the grace she had received, her humility prompted her to hide herself. Our Lord, who of course knew what had taken place, said: "Who hath touched My garments?" And when the disciples were telling Him that it was impossible to keep the people from pressing upon Him, He looked about to see the woman who had

been healed. Then she, trembling, threw herself at His feet, and confessed the whole truth. And Jesus said: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go thy way in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease."

*Facts in my own Life*

I have touched, not the garments only, but the very Body and Blood of our Lord, oh, how often! and yet the ailments of my soul which have been with me all my life are with me still—my selfishness, my conceit, my unkindness. There must be something wanting in my confessions and communions that this should be the case. Perhaps it is the want of the fervour, faith, and humility of this woman whom our Lord healed with a touch of the hem of His garment. I have been near Him very often, but the virtue has not gone out from Him, because my faith was not such as to make me whole.

O Jesus! how little use I have made of all the means of grace you have so kindly thrown in my way! I have not looked with

real trust to you. Now that you have attracted me to yourself, let me get closer and closer every day. I want to love you and serve you. Dear Jesus, let nothing come between you and me. Let nothing ever separate me from you, my Lord, my God, my All.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, help me to correspond faithfully with all the graces you give me.

## XVI

## The Healing of Jairus's Daughter

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was still speaking to the woman whom He had cured, the servants of Jairus came and told him that his daughter was dead, and begged him not to trouble our Lord any further. But Jesus hearing it, said : " Fear not ; believe only, and she shall be safe." Then Jesus went forward with His disciples. And when He came to the house He would not permit any of the crowd to enter with Him, only Peter and James and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. Then our Lord turned out the musicians so as not to alarm the child unnecessarily ; and going in, He took the child by the hand and said to her : " Maid, arise." And the soul came again into her body, and



He restored her to her parents, and told them to give her something to eat. He also told them not to publish what had been done.

*Facts in my own Life*

Here I see our Lord thinking most carefully of the comfort of this little child. The music which would only frighten her, the crowd which would be sure to alarm her must be got rid of. Her father and mother are to be there to prevent her from being disturbed by the presence of others. She must be put at once at her ease by having something to eat. How little in my life have I taken thought for the comfort of others! There are a few that I would take some trouble to please, but I should like them to know that I had done so.

O Jesus, how your unselfish, thoughtful kindness puts me to shame! I have scarcely recognized that I was called upon to take thought for the comfort and ease of those near and dear to me, and you show me how I ought to be concerned about even those

who are nothing to me. I cannot think of the convenience or comfort of others, and you always contrive for that of the merest child you have to do with. Teach me, dear Lord, in all my dealings with others to seek the kind way, the considerate way, your way always.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me generous.

## XVII

## The Cure of Two Blind Men

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was leaving the house of Jairus and going to His Mother's house or St. Peter's, two blind men followed Him, crying out: "O Son of David, have mercy on us." Our Lord went on, apparently taking no notice of them; but when He came to the house, seeing they had followed Him closely, He turned to them and said: "Do you believe that I can do this unto you?" They said to Him: "Yea, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying: "According to your faith be it done unto you," and their eyes were opened. Our Lord strictly charged them to let no man know the cure that He had worked in them; but they, going out, spread His fame in all that country.

*Facts in my own Life*

What should I have done if our Lord had let me follow Him apparently without paying any attention to me? In all probability I should have done what I so often do if people do not attend to what I say or ask—I get vexed, or feel aggrieved, or let my pride get the better of me, and I say, “I will just let them see that I can get on without them.” The idea of taking the rebuff and persevering in my petition would scarcely strike me. Then again, when I have been heard, instead of being really grateful for the favour done me, I pride myself on getting what I wanted; it has been my idea, my doing, and so-and-so has come round to my wish. I am not really anxious to give the one who has done me the favour, the credit for anything. It has been a case of getting as much self-satisfaction as I could, not of giving as much praise as I could to another.

O Jesus! I thank you for your kindness in showing me how weak I have been in this

way. Would that I could forget myself more! Give me grace at least to persevere in my petitions to you. Give me grace to be generous in my acknowledgement of your favours. Lord, I have thought of you so little when once I have got what I wanted. Let me give you all praise and all thanks always. I thank you, dear Lord, for all you have given me or will give me in the future.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart more like yours.

## XVIII

## The Cure of the Dumb Man

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord was going out of Capharnaum they brought Him a dumb man possessed by the devil. And when He had cast out the devil the dumb man spoke, and the multitude were in admiration, but some said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." These cavillers our Lord met in argument, and reduced to silence. There were always two sorts of people who witnessed our Lord's actions and heard His words—those who in simplicity watched His deeds and carefully stored up His words, and those who watched Him that they might accuse Him, and listened to Him and questioned Him that they might throw ridicule or reproach on His teaching.

*Facts in my own Life*

In the actions and words of God's priests I find myself among the cavillers. Their acts are too formal or too unguarded. They are always, to my eyes, too "something or other." Their words, the only ones I take notice of, are either mistakes (at least, I remember them in order to ask some one else whether they are mistakes or not) or they are, to my mind, ridiculous, and I remember them so that I can hold the priest up to ridicule. Yet I know that they do and have done and said many good things. These, too, I remember, but only to compare with some fault of another. "Father So-and-so was so particular over the altar," is remembered and mentioned only to emphasize how negligent Father So-and-so is, and so on. There is no doubt at all that I should be more on our Lord's side if I remembered only good deeds and words, or at least related only these to others.

O Jesus! teach me to restrain my tongue

when speaking of your priests. Let me always remember that I am helping you more by dwelling on their good side, and exposing only that in conversation. Help me, dear Lord, to help your work, and not to be an hindrance to you ; for it is as easy, with care, to help you as to stand in your way.

*Aspiration.*—O Jesus, cleanse my heart and my lips, that I may never offend Thee in my words.



## XIX

## Our Lord returns to Jerusalem

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

IN the midst of all the fame which began to go before and to follow Him because of His miracles, our Lord took the long journey to Jerusalem for one of the great festivals. Our Lord undertook these journeys principally for the sake of His disciples. As they were walking from place to place He took two or three of them with Him, and talked to them of their own souls and of the work He wished them to do. He took infinite pains in instructing them, so that these poor ignorant men might be able to plant the Church. At the places where they stopped our Lord gave more general instructions, and was busy teaching them by His example how to treat each other. Thus He made a

long journey, which most people consider a nuisance, into an occasion for doing good and advancing the kingdom of His Father.

*Facts in my own Life*

My tendency is rather to find excuses for not doing little acts of charity than to find occasions when I might do them. Then I suddenly become conscious that I have not done anything for God, and I begin to try and find something which will be easy, or will take the least time, or offer the least chance of ridicule. Of course I know that I ought not to make myself a nuisance to others by introducing pious subjects in conversation, but I need not be averse from taking them up when others begin them.

O Jesus, how kind you always were in seeking the good of those with whom you lived! How kind to show me how in a simple way I may follow you! How well you employed these long weary journeys! Teach me also to listen to your inspira-

tions. Let me be always at your feet, dear Lord.

*Aspiration.*—“Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”

## XX

## The Man healed at Bethsaida

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE first thing we hear of our Lord on getting to Jerusalem this time is His visit to the Pool of Bethsaida. We are told an angel came at certain times into the pool, and the water was moved, and the first man who got into the water after this movement was healed. Our Lord found here a man who had been waiting patiently for thirty-eight years. He must have almost given up hope. He had a pitiful life before him—no provision for his old age, simply the alms of the people who came to the pool. Our Lord knew all this, and in His kindness was pleased to reward the man's patience. He said to the sick man: "Wilt thou be made whole?" The poor man explained his

hopeless case to Him, and our Lord said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk;" and immediately the man was made whole.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have found many who thought they had no one to help them, and I, too, have been tempted to think that there was no one who could really help me in my spiritual life. I have seen that others have been called and have made great advances, and I seem to have been left to wait and wait, and get very little better. Patience, no doubt, is very easy to advise, but it has not been easy to practise in my case. I will try to rejoice in the good fortune of others, and leave myself to my Lord, who has been so much more kind to me than I deserved.

O Jesus! pardon me for my want of trust in you. Pardon my restlessness, my anxiety. You will be kind to me as you always have been. I will try to put no obstacle in the way of your goodness to me I will wait, not for an angel, but for you

dear Lord. Teach me to be ready when you come to me that I may make the most of your favours.

*Aspiration.*—“In Thee, O Lord, I have trusted; let me not be confounded for ever.”

## XXI

## The Healing on the Sabbath

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

SOME Jews standing near saw the lame man who had been healed at the Pool of Bethesda carrying his bed. They therefore stopped him and told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. He, in all simplicity, told them that He who had healed him told him to take up his bed and walk. These men were ready to find fault with the most virtuous and charitable actions of their neighbour. Our Lord submitted Himself to this kind of criticism in order to show us how false most of our criticism is.

*Facts in my own Life*

I wonder if I should have been shocked at seeing this poor man carrying his bed on a Sunday, or doing something that I had

been brought up not to do. Even if I am not shocked at such things, I often talk as if I had a right to criticize everybody and everything. And yet, when I take the trouble to think of it, I find that I really do not know enough of my neighbours' motives to be able to form a right judgement. Especially is this the case with priests, who seem to do at times things that I cannot understand or that I do not agree with. Of course my duty is clear in this matter, if only I had the courage to do it. I ought to notice everything which I can use in their praise, and leave the rest to God, unless it is my duty to notice and correct what is wrong.

O Jesus! I have much to beg pardon for in this matter. I have let so much of myself come into my opinion of others. Grant me, Lord, to see you in all who are yours, but especially in your priests. This may be hard to do sometimes, but I will at least try. I see how I shall be helping you more by speaking well of all that are yours. Let



me see with your kind eyes the good that is in all, and let me leave the wrong, if there is any, to you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, kind Saviour, make me kind to all for your sake.

## XXII

## The Jews seek to kill our Lord

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord saw that the Jews were angry with Him, He began to address them, claiming His right to put aside the law if He wished. He claimed the power over life and death: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will." Again, He claimed to be the judge of all men, both on earth and after death. He saw that it was opportune that He should assert Himself. He told them that He was sent by the Father with full power. He did not rely on His own statement, but convinced them by works which were plainly divine, and He appealed to the Scripture. He did not demand glory from them; He was not anxious for that. He put before them as

the end of their actions, the glory which His Father had given Him and would give to them also, if they did His will and took His testimony.

*Facts in my own Life*

Here my Lord shows me that at times I may be called upon to take a stand and refuse to be turned aside by the opinion of those about me. But how differently He makes His stand! It is not to gain the goodwill of others, except so far as that goodwill is the will of His Father. My first idea is not to give any explanation if my conduct is complained of, but to shut myself up in myself. I do not care to take the trouble to put the matter on right principles. I rely more on its being my will than on its being God's will.

O Jesus! I thank you for teaching me my duty in so many different ways—sometimes by your deeds, sometimes by your words. Let me always have the grace to take all in the way you wish me to do. Let

me ever put your will first. Grant me the strength not to look for my own glory, but in all that I do or say to seek your glory, and to be glad if for your sake I have to suffer neglect and dishonour.

*Aspiration.*—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

## XXIII

## St. Mary Magdalen

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord arrived in Jerusalem, He was invited to the house of a rich man named Simon whom, no doubt, He had cured of leprosy. While He was there Magdalen, who had led a sinful life but had been converted by His preaching, came in, full of love and desiring to give a mark of her faith. She brought with her a box of precious ointment, and seeing our Lord there waiting for supper, she poured the ointment upon His head. She came another time just before His Passion and washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. This time she simply anointed our Lord's head. She brought the most costly ointment she could obtain ; nothing was too good for our Lord.

*Facts in my own Life*

I cannot give our Lord much, but do I honestly give Him the very best, or only the remnants of those things which I can give? Do I give Him the first and the best of my love, or do I only think of this when I feel that I am left and forsaken by others? My time in prayer to Him—how grudgingly I have given this!

O Jesus, how ashamed I am when I compare the love and generosity of St. Mary Magdalen with my own! What a contrast is her life after her conversion with mine! With what love and fervour she turned to you, never once looking back! My Jesus! give me some of the great love and fervour of this true penitent. Much has been forgiven me; oh, may I also love you much! How kind and good you were to her! Be kind also to me. If I could only learn to love you as Magdalen did I could do so much for you; I should be then more ready to sacrifice myself for you and for your friends.

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Give me a great love of you, dear Lord.  
Do not deny me.

*Aspiration.*—O Jesus, I want to love you  
with my whole heart.

## XXIV

## The Cure of the Withered Hand

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

ON a certain day Jesus went into one of the synagogues, and there was a man whose right hand was withered. The pharisees therefore asked our Lord if it was lawful to heal on the sabbath day. They asked this in order to get something wherewith to accuse Him. Our Lord explained the great law of charity, which is beyond all human law, and even dispenses from all positive divine law. The law of love which He came to preach made it lawful to disregard other law for the sake of charity. The law of resting from servile work, which had been so strictly interpreted by the pharisees, was held as an excuse for not healing the sick. Our Lord explained that the law of love was supreme.



*Facts in my own Life*

I have been inclined to make any excuse to save myself from doing little kindnesses to my neighbour. I am unwilling to do some little service for some one because they seem selfish or ungrateful. I prefer my own work to the good, or at least the pleasure, of my neighbour. I catch at any excuse; often I have not such a good excuse as these pharisees had. Am I, like them, putting hindrances in the way of God's work? I may easily do so by omitting to do little things which would in time help our Lord's work in the world.

O Jesus! I thank you for showing me in so many ways how I may serve you and help others to serve you. Help me to rouse myself and to be more generous with you. I will try to consider little acts of kindness not as a burden, but as a work of love. Let me study your way, and enable me to follow it loyally.

*Aspiration.*—"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

## XXV

**The Sermon on the Mount***Facts in our Lord's Life*

AFTER being before the world for a sufficient time to be known and sought after (for wherever He went at that time we hear that the people flocked to Him) our Lord began the systematic teaching of His disciples and the people. A large number of people had followed Him from all parts of Galilee and Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the country beyond the Jordan. This was the time He had chosen. He was never in a hurry. Thoughtful kindness was our Lord's great characteristic, and He knew that He had to prepare men's hearts for His teaching. By acts of kindness and careful instruction wherever the people came to listen to Him,

He prepared for the announcement of the new gospel—the gospel of lowliness, meekness, poverty, and self-restraint.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am inclined to lose heart both with myself and with those around me. I am in such a hurry, that if I am not perfect at once I feel that I never shall be. Now I know that our Lord will treat me according to my perseverance, and not according to my progress. He is different from men, who judge so much by results. He does not object to slow progress, so long as it is constant. He was daily teaching His apostles, and yet for nearly a year He kept from them the first principles of His gospel.

O Jesus! I thank you for bringing this fact to my mind. I need it, Lord, very much. I know how imperfect I am. Give me grace to persevere. Perseverance in your service I know means progress. I will try to be humble in my failures, but never let me give up my resolution. I have

chosen you, Lord, and I cannot do without you now.

*Aspiration.*—O Jesus, vouchsafe this day to keep me without sin.

## XXVI

## “Blessed are the poor in spirit”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

AT the beginning of this as it were official statement of the New Law, our Lord places the Beatitudes. These are tests of belonging to the new order. In them we find the principal differences between the New Law and the Law which had been in the world hitherto. He begins with a love of poverty. Blessed are the poor, that is those, whether poor or rich, who are poor in spirit. These are they who do not set their hearts on riches; who are not only willing, but desirous, to be without that which riches bring. To these our Lord promises the kingdom of Heaven. The whole world looks up to the rich, and has from the beginning desired the effects of riches. Our Lord points out the better way, and has given us a perfect

example of the worthlessness of riches for obtaining true happiness even in this life.

*Facts in my own Life*

I may not have really set my heart on riches, but I like the ways of rich people—their comfort, ease, refinement. And how jealous I am of the things I call my own! I have not been accustomed to glory in poverty, but rather the reverse. I have regarded poverty only as something to be dreaded, forgetting how my Lord chose poverty as His companion from the manger to the cross.

O Jesus! give me this spirit of poverty. Let me see how noble it is to give up all that will end here for the treasures you have in store for me in heaven. I know that I can never advance far in the path of perfection unless I am more detached than I am now. Make me ready to give up all for you, who have done so much for me.

*Aspiration.*—What can I render to you, my God, for all you have given to me?

## XXVII

## “Blessed are the meek”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord gives as the second mark of His disciples that they shall strive after meekness. They shall not put themselves forward ; they shall be content to be put aside. His own example was most striking ; it was the mark He gave of His own teaching. It is the virtue He tells us all to learn from Him : “ Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” The reward He offers is one which may be taken in many senses. “ They shall possess the land.” The “ land ” may be the Promised Land on earth, *i.e.*, joy and peace and contentment ; or it may mean the Promised Land in heaven. In either sense it is a great reward.

*Facts in my own Life*

Meekness is one of the virtues that I have practised very little. It is not one that has attracted me much. I like my own way, and in anything I am interested in I like to have a prominent place. In many ways I can see that my meekness requires a good deal of cultivation. There is no virtue I know which seems to grow so slowly.

O Jesus! I thank you for letting me see how imperfect is my imitation of you. Give me courage to persevere in acquiring this virtue in which I am so lacking. Let me not turn back, but give me strength to press on very steadily. Let me see your meekness always, and imitate it at all times; then you will give me joy and peace of heart here and rest and the possession of your own self for ever in heaven.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto yours.



## XXVIII

## “Blessed are they that mourn”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THERE are two instances in our Lord's life where it is recorded that He wept—the first, before He raised Lazarus to life; the second, when He was on His triumphal procession into Jerusalem just before His Passion. He allowed Himself to mourn in this way for my sake; to teach me how I ought to go through the like trial. On the first occasion, the death of Lazarus, He wished to feel the full force of the sorrow for the death of a friend; He loved Lazarus, and was filled with grief at his death. In the second instance He wished to feel the pang of neglect, for He knew that the city would reject Him and crucify Him, and would go on in its sin till it called for the vengeance of God. Yet His mourning for Lazarus did not prevent Him from com-

forting his sisters, Martha and Mary, nor from exerting not only His human but His divine power in the most effective manner; and His mourning over Jerusalem did not prevent Him from doing all He could to save all in the city. He did not leave untried one single effort to make the neglect He foresaw into devotion and love.

*Facts in my own Life*

Sorrow usually drives me into myself and makes me forget others. I am weak, and I let my weakness affect those about me. The reason is the same which I find for most of my faults—I think too much of myself and too little of how I may be a help to others. Again, neglect, or any suspicion of neglect, drives me upon myself, and makes me give up trying to do good to those who show me the neglect, instead of making me try the harder.

O Jesus, how much I have still to learn from you! How your divine unselfishness makes me see what a selfish creature I am!

How ashamed I am of my weakness when I see your divine strength! My dear Jesus! make me generous, make me strong. I will mourn indeed, but with your help I will strive at the same time to be a comfort to others. Comfort me when my time of mourning shall cease.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, comfort me.

## XXIX

**“Blessed are they that hunger and  
thirst after justice”**

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord's hunger and thirst for justice were exemplified in His life from the beginning to the end: He came that the justice of His Father might be satisfied; He suffered that sin might be atoned for. The reason He came as a child was that children might for love of Him have their due. The reason why He preached was that the poor might have the Gospel preached to them. The justice He always hungered for was that others should have their due. The blessing He received was that others might be brought to love God, and so obtain heaven. He was always for others, with not a thought of self.

*Facts in my own Life*

As long as I have justice done to me I am careless of what is due to others. My own wrongs, or imagined wrongs, fill my mind much more than others' rights. I fret because my faults or mistakes are the only things taken notice of; I little think how often I pass over the good qualities of others, and see only their faults. I forget how little attention I pay to the good advice which is given to me at times, and yet I am annoyed when the advice I give is not followed. So the blessing I wish for from my hunger and thirst after justice is my own way, and not, as in our Lord's case, the only satisfying love of God.

O Jesus, how different is my hunger and thirst for justice from yours! If only I could always see your way, and hunger for your rights, how much better and happier I should be, and how much more progress I should make in your love! Teach me, dear Lord, to hunger and thirst as I ought. I will

leave the blessing to you in your own time. Bless me with your love, that I may love you with all my heart. Oh, may you never be forced to deprive me of your love !

*Aspiration.*—My God, fill me with love of you.

## XXX

## “Blessed are the merciful”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE mercy which our Lord showed to sinners was most marked. He was even called the friend or associate of sinners and publicans. He chose one of His disciples from this latter class. So, too, He tells us by His prophets that He prefers mercy to sacrifice. It is one of the most difficult lessons to learn from our Lord.

*Facts in my own Life*

Notice how frequently we fall into the fault of pulling our neighbour's character to pieces. Is not gossip mostly of that kind? The young grumble at their elders, and the elders seem never tired of showing each

other what a poor opinion they have of their juniors. Thank God, we are not to be judged by our fellows!

I am afraid I have not been very careful to avoid unkind judgements about others. I have been exacting at times. If people have anything to say against me, I am usually ready with an excuse which I consider a good one. If I were a little more merciful I should be able to see how others have or may have a good excuse for things I blame them for. The true, merciful way is to try and put myself in the place of those whose conduct I blame, but in order to do this I must put aside my prejudices, when I should find that there is not so much to blame as I thought.

O Jesus! give me the grace to look at others with your kind eyes. Make me kind and merciful with those I love, with those I meet, with those whose conduct I hear discussed. I know, dear Lord, that you who found an excuse for your very executioners, will be merciful to me if I show mercy to



others. Teach me, if I judge at all, to judge with your own divine mercy.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me merciful, that I may obtain mercy.

## XXXI

“Blessed are the clean of heart”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

BECAUSE our Lord was God and Man He was blessed with the sight of His Father always. As God, He could not be without the closest union with God; as Man this blessed union was communicated to Him because of the close union between His two natures in one person. The cleanness of heart which merited this blessing for His human nature consisted in the perfect conformity between His divine and human will. As Man He spoke when He said: “Not My will, but Thine be done.” Cleanness of heart consists in not letting our love rest on any object except in God and for God. That our Lord kept His whole love for His Father alone is evident from the way in which He always worked for His Father, and

disregarded all thought of His own ease and comfort. It is our self-seeking which prevents us from seeing God and His will.

*Facts in my own Life*

I do not think I should really leave what I knew to be God's will in my regard, but I am not quite so sure that my heart is clean enough to let me see His will very clearly. I am afraid to make an effort to see clearly, because of the sacrifice such clear sight might entail. For instance, I am told that I ought to be less selfish or less self-seeking, but I am afraid to begin to act on the advice given me on account of what I may have to give up. Yet I know that if I did so I should by God's grace see His will more clearly.

O Jesus ! cleanse my heart that I may see you very clearly when you show yourself to me. I know that now I cannot see you except in a dark manner. Make me very faithful to what I do see, and very anxious to know you better and to follow you more closely. Let me judge of all earthly love by

the test : Does it make me love you better and forget myself, or does it draw me away from you ?

*Aspiration.*—O my Lord ! I do want to see you. Make me clean of heart that I may see you and enjoy you for ever.

## XXXII

## “Blessed are the peace-makers”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THERE was one occasion in our Lord's life when this love of peace-making was very evident. It was during His Passion, when He allowed Himself to be made a butt and a laughing-stock in order to bring Pilate and Herod together, and make them friends, “for they had been enemies one to the other.”

Again, the title Prince of Peace was one of those given to Him in prophecy; and in His last discourse to the disciples the last legacy He gave was His peace: “My peace I leave to you, My peace I give to you.” So throughout His life He was always seeking to bring peace to all hearts.

*Facts in my own Life*

I, too, desire peace, but it is mostly that I may be left alone, and be able to go on in my own way. The peace which would come if I did not seek myself is a stranger to me. It was because our Lord was always ready to give way that He was so full of peace. If I see such conduct in others, I call it weakness. Yet I see that when there was no question of the honour due to His Father, our Lord always gave way. Especially is this the way with His Mother: He changed the time of His manifestation at her bidding at Cana in Galilee. I myself know that I have found much more peace when I have sought occasions of giving way to others.

O Jesus! I will try yet harder in the future. Let me sit at your feet and learn this lesson of you. What a reward, too, you offer for all who seek to make peace—"to be called the children of God."

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, give me your peace.

## XXXIII

“Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As our Lord sanctified sorrow by His example, so He rendered the state of persecution blessed by suffering it all through His life. Even before His birth he had to suffer in the neglect His Mother suffered. As soon as He was born He had to fly from persecution. All through His public life He felt He was persecuted by His own people, and at last was condemned to death and suffered the most painful form of death. And not only in open and bodily persecution, but also in the second form mentioned did our Lord suffer: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and say all manner of

evil against you untruly." No one was reviled as our Lord was, yet He suffered all meekly, thinking of the reward which He was purchasing for me, and showing me how to gain it.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have sometimes thought I should like to do and suffer something hard for God, and I have been humbled when I found how I took little annoyances, which can only by exaggerating be called sufferings. A slight is quite enough to put me out of temper. These little things, if borne patiently, mean a high place in heaven, and the power of doing much more for God than I have done so far.

O Jesus! let me learn this lesson from you better than I have done in the past. Teach me to be ready to bear any annoyance for your sake. It is only very little that I can do, but let me do that little cheerfully, for I know that the more these things are against my natural inclinations the more



they will unite me to you, my Lord and my God.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, teach me how to suffer.

## XXXIV

## The Centurion's Servant

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

A CENTURION, who had been good to the Jews, had a favourite servant who was sick even unto death. When he heard that Jesus was once more in Capharnaum he sent to some of the chief men among the Jews, and asked them to intercede for him with our Lord. When these men came to our Lord they told Him what He already knew, that this gentile was a good friend to the Jews. Jesus at once went with them, and when He came near the house the centurion met Him and spoke to Him in words full of faith: "I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this one, 'go,' and he goeth." Thus he acknowledged that in a much more authoritative way our Lord who was God, and as God subject to no man,

could command the disease to leave his servant. Our Lord responded to the man's faith, as He always did, and cured the servant without going to the house. Our Lord listened patiently both to the Jews and the centurion, and was prompt to do as they wished Him.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am inclined to interrupt people who are talking about anything I know better than they; and if for any reason they are in my bad books, the impulse is irresistible. Then from my interference comes vexation. Our Lord knew very much better than the Jews or the centurion all they had told Him, still he listened attentively. It was this forbearance which made so many come to Him a second time in their difficulties, while my impatience prevents many from coming a second time to me.

O Jesus! I thank you for your kindness in thinking of me and my failings, and showing me how to correct them. Give me

the grace to follow your kind example. I have many opportunities of making myself more like you, for there are not a few who make me feel impatient. Bear with me, Lord ; do not leave me, though I am so slow to follow you. Help me to be more careful not to interrupt, not to put people right unless it is really necessary.

*Aspiration.*—My kind Jesus, make me kind after your example.

## XXXV

## The Widow of Naim

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

ABOUT this time, when our Lord was on one of His missionary journeys, He came to a city called Naim, and His disciples and a great multitude were with Him. As they came to Naim they were met by a small sorrowful procession—a poor widow following the body of her only son. Jesus made the multitude that followed Him stand aside, and He advanced, and addressing first the mother, He comforted her: “Weep not.” Then, to follow His comforting words by deeds, for He never rested with words only, He stopped the procession, and then worked a beautiful miracle—“Young man, I say to thee arise.” Our Lord’s first thought was for the sorrowing mother; “He gave him to his mother.”

Our Lord was always thoughtful for those in trouble, and He wishes me to be thoughtful too. He wants me to give kind thoughts, words and deeds to those about me, high or low, rich or poor, befriended or neglected, who are in trouble.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have shirked this way of following my Lord, I have sought for reasons to excuse me rather than to urge me to be prompt in giving consolation. Sometimes I have even thought that a little affliction would do my neighbour good, but my Lord shows me that a little consolation always does more good.

O Jesus! I thank you for letting me see your way; let me never lose sight of it again. You have taught me to think first of kindness, next of any other virtue, and last of all of myself. How slow I am to learn your lessons! I am so ready to put myself first. I want others to have consideration for me, and when they do not, I am annoyed, and

feel that I cannot be kind to them. But you, dear Lord, always put yourself aside, and were always kind. How like the world it would have been if you had made the little procession stand aside while you and the multitude entered the city.

*Aspiration.*—My Jesus, put kindness into my heart, that I may be kind to all.





SIMPLE MEDITATIONS  
ON THE LIFE OF OUR LORD  
Third Series



Simple Meditations  
on  
the Life of our Lord

By the Right Rev.  
JOSEPH OSWALD SMITH  
Abbot of Ampleforth

THIRD SERIES

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*Abbot of Reading,*

*President General of the English Congregation  
of the Order of St. Benedict.*

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# Simple Meditations

on

## the Life of our Lord

### I

#### The Deputation from John

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As the people began to flock round our Lord, St. John the Baptist wished to know for certain if the time was come for him to retire. He therefore sent two of his disciples to our Lord to ask Him plainly if He was the Messiah, or whether John was still to expect another. Our Lord would not give him a direct answer, but only told him through his disciples the facts which were sufficient for him to form an opinion. As the disciples from John were in the company of Jesus He healed many, and worked

miracles of all kinds, and preached constantly to the poor. Then in answer to the question, "Art Thou He that is to come, or look we for another?" He told them to tell John what they had seen and heard: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached."

*Facts in my own Life*

I, too, am sometimes perplexed and long for a clear word from God or from His minister when the facts are quite sufficient for me, when what I hear and see, joined with an unselfish courage, are all I need to make me act as our Lord would wish me. It might have been for the sake of his disciples that St. John sent to inquire, for it is scarcely possible that he should have been in doubt himself. But still, the answer of our Lord is an answer to me in all perplexity. I have quite enough facts to enable me to make up my mind, only I will not let my heart decide—perhaps



because I live in hope that the time has not yet come when I am bound to act strongly, and side, once and for all, with my Lord.

O Jesus! give me this courage. I am such a coward. I am so afraid to listen to you sometimes. I want you now to speak to me quite plainly. I know I cannot be excused if I am putting myself in danger. You and my own soul are all I must consider. Give me courage.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, strengthen me.

## II

## “Whom went ye to see?”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN the deputation from John the Baptist had left our Lord, He began to speak to those about Him concerning John. After rejecting the ideas that John was sought after because of his fickleness (“a reed shaken by the wind”), or his riches (“a man clothed in soft garments”), or merely his preaching (“a prophet”), He told them the true place which St. John held in the work of their salvation: “An angel sent before the Lord to prepare His way.” So our Lord would point out to me the true place I ought to occupy in His work: an angel—a messenger—before His face.

*Facts in my own Life*

I like to attract people. Still I know that I do not always act as an angel before my

Lord's face to prepare His way. It is mostly my own way that I want to prepare. I do not act in our Lord's interests as I promise to do in my prayers. I do not altogether forget myself or I should not find it so difficult to do acts of charity, such as visiting the sick or those in trouble. If I could only see things as St. John did, I should be much more ready to work for God; much more ready to sacrifice my time and my pleasure than I have been.

O Jesus! I am so often asking you to show me how I can do something for you. How easy it would be for me to be an angel before your face! I am very far from being an angel in my temper, and in my will to give myself up to your service; but with your help I can and I will try to be more of a messenger of good than I have been. I do not ask you to let me do hard and heroic things, but I do want to please you by the earnestness with which I mean to do the ordinary work of my life.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me constant.

## III

## The Children in the Market-place

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord was speaking about St. John the Baptist, the way in which His words were received made Him use the figure of children in the market-place who were never satisfied. The Pharisees and lawyers complained of St. John that he was too severe, and then complained of our Lord that He was too lax. St. John was preaching penance, and they would not hear: our Lord was preaching love, and giving an example of love, and they called Him a drinker of wine, a friend of sinners. He did not expect that they would all listen to Him, but He knew that some few favoured ones would do so; therefore, in spite of all His enemies had to say, He continued doing good in His own kind way.

*Facts in my own Life*

I fret if nothing comes of my efforts for others, and I am hurt if any one suggests that I am rather a failure. I want any good I may have done to be acknowledged. What an awful thing to have to own to myself that I am not contented with the good opinion of my Lord, but must seek for that of people whose opinion I do not usually value. Now by the example of our Lord I ought to know that if I am doing His work I must not expect more recognition than He Himself obtained from men.

O Jesus! I so often forget that I am doing your work, and that it is by your opinion only that my work is to be judged. If I could only remember this, I should not be downhearted; for you are a much kinder Judge than others. Dear Lord, you will not overlook one little act of mine; you never forget; you count everything I have ever done for you, and will certainly give it its full value when I stand before you to be

judged. Give me the grace to be content to wait for your verdict and not to be anxious about the good opinion of those I live with.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, be not to me a judge, but a merciful Saviour.

## IV

## The Holy Women

### *Facts in our Lord's Life*

It is recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke that certain pious women who had received favours from our Lord "ministered to Him of their substance" during His journeys through the cities and villages. Whether they followed Him from town to town, or simply made it a duty to entertain Him and His disciples when they came their way, we do not know; but we are certain that they did so minister, and that He was entertained by them. The Evangelist, after mentioning Mary Magdalen, Joanna and Susanna, says, "and many others who ministered to Him of their substance." That our Lord was pleased to receive this devotion on the part of the pious women is evident from the fact that He gave them the privilege to be near

Him in His Passion, when even the disciples had left Him ; He allowed them to minister to His body in preparing it for the grave ; and He rewarded them all in the person of St. Mary Magdalen by appearing to her before He was seen by His disciples.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have done some little ministry to our Lord, and I have been glad to do it. But I have not always recognized that I must not expect more honour during my life than our Lord allowed to those who were good to Him whilst He was on earth. I have looked for appreciation, and I have been hurt because others did not value my work at my own estimate. I ought to know that want of appreciation is a special gift of our Lord. He gave the holy women a precedence in suffering, a prominent place by the Cross.

O Jesus ! I am so weak, I can bear suffering and disappointment so badly ; but I ask you to give me the courage not to expect



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consolation here. Let me be satisfied with discouragement, and persevere though I am not appreciated. I desire, above all, to serve you for yourself, dear Lord, and not for myself.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, inflame my heart with the desire of pleasing you alone.

## V

**His Mother and His Brethren***Facts in our Lord's Life*

ON one occasion when our Lord was teaching the multitude, our Lady and some of the disciples joined the crowd, and the rumour reached Him that His mother and His brethren stood on the outside of the crowd, and wished to speak to Him. Our Lord went on with His instruction, only remarking that His mother and His brethren were those who heard His word and kept it. He knew quite well that His mother did not want Him to leave the work He was engaged upon, and He saw the chance of letting me see that I must not allow social duties, which might easily wait, to interfere with any work I am doing directly for Him.

*Facts in my own Life*

How often have I exaggerated the importance of some small household duty, knowing that it would prevent me from that work for God which He particularly asked of me! How much more readily I have found excuses for leaving my spiritual duties, than for doing them! Now I see that thought of myself, rather than love of duty, has prompted these excuses; for in most cases I have usually found work to do which is more to my natural taste than that which I have neglected. For example, when I might have done an act of kindness by visiting some poor person who was not very clean, I have been quick to discover some other work which I liked better, and which hindered this act of charity.

O Jesus! I have shirked the work which you have given me the opportunity of doing for you. It is indeed good of you to associate me with you in your work which you gave as a special mark of your mission:

“The poor have the Gospel preached to them.” Oh, make me more regularly kind and thoughtful for your poor, in spite of any annoyances I may meet with.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, Father of the poor, make me rich in grace through kindness to the poor.

## VI

## The Parable of the Sower

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord exercised great discretion in the words He spoke to the Jews. From His disciples He hid nothing, explaining whatever they asked Him; to others He spoke only in parables; to some He would not speak at all. When He spoke to the Apostles He knew whether they were ready to receive His message; and when He saw that they understood Him, and were prepared to act on His advice, He spoke openly and at great length. What He did was to find the good ground, and when that was found, He gave as much seed as the ground could bear. When He knew, as in Herod's case, that His words would be of no avail, He did not open His mouth.

*Facts in my own Life*

Do I not sometimes speak when I know I shall only add fuel to the fire? If I were in authority I might be obliged to speak even though I knew that what I said would have no effect; but I have been wanting in the discretion so eminently manifested in our Lord's life. Mostly I have thought, not so much of how other people failed, but of how their failure to do what seemed to me their duty annoyed or inconvenienced me. Our Lord always took the other view. He spoke when He knew it was for their good, not having any regard for His own convenience. I should have been tired of waiting for the gradual development of the proper spirit in the case of the Apostles. I should have launched out and made them frightened to speak to me, and then their training would have been imperfect.

O Jesus! I thank you for your kindness in being so patient with me. I know I do harm at times with my inopportune words.

Make me less hasty, dear Lord ; let me never do harm by my tongue, but, always thinking of your example, strive to do good rather by my life than by my words.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me less hasty.

## VII

## “Let your Light shine”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

“I AM the true light,” said our Lord of Himself. His light is that of charity; the pure, disinterested love of God. Thus throughout His life He always showed Himself anxious that the honour of His Father should be acknowledged. He was seemingly careless of His own honour. He did not seem to mind when He was called a glutton and a wine-bibber; but when He was called a blasphemer He objected and showed that He only cared for His Father's honour. So again, He did many miracles in secret, but when there was occasion of seeking His Father's honour, He did not hesitate to work the most stupendous miracles before large crowds of people.



*Facts in my own Life*

I cannot say I do not think at all of God's honour, for I do consider Him sometimes, but I do not forget my own ; and where His honour stands on the one side and a little ridicule on the other, I find that often the honour of God has not been a strong enough motive to induce me to chance the ridicule. Yet I am not satisfied to hear myself called weak in these things. The fact is I rely too much on myself and not enough on my Lord in whom is my strength. The difficulty is to know how I am to change, because it is so easy to stand up for God and His side in a way which will set others against Him. I should act more in accord with our Lord's example if I were to be more thoughtful for God's honour than my own, and willing for my work to be for the most part secret so long as God's honour did not suffer.

O Jesus ! I thank you for your kindness in thus helping me to be more like you. I

do wish it, my dear Lord. In my heart I really do not care about being honoured and thought much of, especially if such honour is taken from you. In my own little way, Lord, I do love your glory and the glory of your house. Be kind to me, dear Lord, and let not my weakness ever lead me to hazard the honour of my Father who is in heaven.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, my Lord, make me more like you.

## VIII

## The Wheat and the Cockle

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE stories our Lord told the people are very precious, for He Himself has said that He chose to speak in parables. The teaching He came down to impart was put in this form. He often does not explain, but just tells a story and leaves it.

The story of the wheat and the cockle is as follows :—A good, honest, hard-working farmer had put good wheat into the ground, and went home, trusting that in due time he might reap an abundant harvest. About the time that the first green blades appeared, the labourers on the farm noticed a number of weeds among the wheat, and finding all of one kind, it was evident to them that they had been deliberately sown. They reported this to the master, and offered to go over the

whole field, weeding out the cockle. The master would not allow them, as they would only have done harm by treading down the young and tender wheat. Both must grow till the harvest, when proper instruction would be given to the reapers ; the cockle would then be burnt, and the wheat gathered into the barns.

*Facts in my own Life*

How impatient I have been over such inconveniences as I have had to suffer ! I am in such a hurry to put matters straight, and the straightening is, for the most part, in some one else's conduct—insignificant things which make as little difference as the cockle seems to have made to the wheat. I only make matters worse by interfering and trying to make things right in other people's lives, which our Lord wishes to leave for a time.

O Jesus ! make me more and more forbearing, more and more patient, especially with those with whom I come in daily contact. Make me ever ready to excuse what I

do not understand, and not to see faults unless I am quite sure that I do understand.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me patient with others as you are with me.

## IX

**The Mustard Seed***Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord was constantly reminding His disciples of the necessity of care in small matters, and the importance of apparently little things. In this parable He teaches the lesson that what is little at any time may be of great importance afterwards. The particular little thing which our Lord referred to in the parable may be anything in our own lives of which we are inclined to think very lightly, but which, if properly attended to, may bring us grace upon grace.

*Facts in my own Life*

For example, it may be a little patience in listening to the conversation of some one who may be in a disputatious humour. I

get annoyed, and encourage my annoyance by letting a number of other little annoyances come to my mind; and then I dwell on the sum of them till I get out of temper and say things which change the nonsense that at first is innocent into vexation. This brings out words which make all feel uncomfortable and ready to snap at each other. I put this down to the original nonsense, but it might just as easily be put down to my want of patience and kind forbearance. Or again, I neglect some little duty, such as the instructing of one who will listen to me; then the opportunity of giving the instruction passes, and I blame the priest for not doing his duty.

O my good Jesus! it is like you to let me see these little things in which I fail. Give me grace to be more careful over the little things which you have left to my own self. I can trust big things to you, O Lord, and I do so; but I want your help also in the smaller things. I see what an effect they may have if I am not careful. Make me

watchful, vigilant, and careful, and determined not to act in a hurry. Help me to be bold in cases where I know I can do good, instead of being fearful because I may make myself appear foolish.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, good and kind, make me good, kind, and patient like you.



## X

## The Leaven

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord in His preaching used every little fact as an assistance to His work. Here was a common event in the life of every family—the simple duty of making good bread. In the baking of bread it is necessary to prepare the meal or flour by introducing into it a new substance which will transform it. By itself flour is not wholesome, but carefully prepared and leavened, it forms the staple food of many. So it is with many things in life. Annoyance from others, leavened by patience and kindness, instead of leading to anger, sulking, and sin, becomes the very food of holiness. Ease and freedom from necessary work, instead of being a fruitful ground for all that is wrong, if it be leavened with a charitable

spirit, becomes a real blessing, not only to myself, but to the poor and neglected in my neighbourhood. The lesson is to find out what it is that will leaven my life, and give it time to work good in me.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am in such a hurry that I never give any process a chance. Just as the yeast requires time to work, so every little exercise I am advised to use requires time. I cannot overcome the habits of years in a day, and it is unreasonable of me to expect to do so. In my dealings with others, how much waste there has been for want of the leaven of patience! In my prayers, how much I miss for want of the leaven of quiet persistence! In all my work for God, how much I miss for want of the leaven of forgetfulness of self!

O Jesus, teach me your lesson, and give me the leaven which will transform me from an easily annoyed to a patient child of yours; from a selfish, wilful child to one who forgets

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self for you, and leaves her own will for yours. Let me learn the value of time, and strive to have the patience which will give your action a chance, your love a proper scope, so that I may become yours always and in all things.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me patient.

## XI

## The Treasure hidden in a Field

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord continually shows us how much we are to be willing to give up for the treasure of a holy life. He Himself was ever ready, not so much for Himself, but for the sake of His disciples, to give up all that He had or might have had. Good name, position, comfort, love—He would part with all to secure a useful lesson for us. With His power of working miracles, there is no position He might not have obtained ; but He frequently put aside that power when the exercise of it might have robbed Him of ignominy or reproach, especially during His Passion, for He came to show us how to use the treasure of the Cross.

*Facts in my own Life*

How little I am willing to give up for the treasure of virtue, for charity to others, for the advance of my prayer, for the good of my neighbour! How I grudge every little sacrifice! How I have to struggle to keep the small amount of treasure I have purchased! If I were left to myself, I should be just as selfish as ever, just as careless of good. How little I am willing to sacrifice myself for a hidden treasure, a treasure no one can see; no one can praise me for—a restraint in word; a restraint in appetite! All these things are very valuable to me, but they make no show. If they did, if they brought me honour or deference, or more apparent result, I might be willing; but because they are hidden with Christ in God I think little of them, and am not ready to make any sacrifice to secure them. When shall I learn the true value of things?

O Jesus! by your constant self-denial, by your carelessness for praise, by your lavish

seeking for reproach, by your thoughtfulness for others, teach me to value the facts of my life at their true worth. Teach me to be content to have my treasure hidden from men. My little charities, how small they are ! and yet if kept for you, how precious ! Let me not allow them to depreciate in value by being exhibited. My little self-denials, let me not turn them into self-praise by making a show of them ; but, having found a few little treasures, let me keep them for you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, my Lord, my treasure !

## XII

## The Son of the Carpenter

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord came amongst His own He found that, however much others upheld and valued Him, those who knew Him in His youth thought nothing of Him. He was to them one of themselves. All His relations were known to them and were much as the rest of the villagers. The virtue which was to make such a mark in the world, to bring in a new era in religion, to impress all the human race, to lead so many souls to a pure, restrained, and self-denying life, was unseen by them. He was nothing to them but the son of a carpenter. How successfully He had hidden His light! How little had He exalted Himself! How little He had taken advantage of all the means in His power of attracting the notice and the respect and

the love of those who lived about Him! Others had come to know Him and appreciate Him, but His own received Him not.

*Facts in my own Life*

It has been a hard thing for me also that those who know me best appreciate me least. I used to think that I was worthy of appreciation; for some time I have been learning that folk have esteemed me at my true value. My Lord in this episode of His life put Himself in the same circumstances, and subjected Himself to the same rejection, to show me how to act; to show me that the appreciation of man was of no value. He was His Father's beloved Son in whom He was well pleased; and He was content that it should be so.

O Jesus! I thank you most sincerely for giving me this lesson. Make me worthy of your love and appreciation, and of that of your holy Mother, and I shall be satisfied. I have looked for the support of those you have given to me as members of my family,



and I have failed to gain it. Do you take charge of me. Take me in hand, and make me worthy of you and of your Father who is in heaven.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me worthy of you.

## XIII

## Herod heard the Fame of Jesus

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord had embarked on His missionary life, His fame spread slowly, and it was not till after the first year that Herod heard of Him. After the murder of St. John, Herod was in constant dread of the judgment of God coming upon him. When he heard of our Lord's wonderful force as a preacher, the report of His daily life, and of the miracles which He constantly worked, he imagined that St. John had risen from the dead, and was in some mysterious way going to bring the vengeance of God upon him ; whereas our Lord would have been only too glad to receive him to repentance and forgive the crime he had committed. When he persisted in his lewd life and showed no signs of repentance, our Lord during His Passion

refused to speak to him ; but now He was ready to forgive, though his sins were red as scarlet.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have never committed such a crime as Herod, but in other ways I have rejected the grace of God and frightened myself, instead of taking the first opportunity of making my peace with God. I know I need not be frightened, for my Lord is always ready to pardon me. The devil sometimes uses this fright to prevent me from going to Holy Communion ; but I know that then I am not acting up to my Lord's word, "Come to Me all you that are heavily burdened." I can laugh at others for neglecting Holy Communion on light grounds, but I do the same myself when my turn comes.

O Jesus ! teach me to trust you and to love you. Make me fear to sin, but let me never fear to come to you when I have sinned. Your love is always ready to take me back. Teach me not to exaggerate my

faults at any time ; and unless I am certain that I need confession, pardon me if I come to you for relief and for strength when I have in some minor way been unfaithful to you. Your arms are wide enough to encompass all my faults.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, draw me to yourself.

## XIV

## The Loaves and Fishes

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN our Lord had heard that John the Baptist was dead and buried, He went by boat into the desert, and the multitude followed him on foot. When He had prayed He came forth and found a great multitude, and took compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening drew on, His disciples wanted Him to send the crowds away that they might go to their homes, for there was no village near where they might find food. But Jesus, knowing that He could provide for them, said, "They have no need to go; give you them to eat." They said, "We have here only five loaves and two fishes." And Jesus took the loaves and, looking up to heaven, blessed and broke and gave to His disciples. They gave them

to the crowd and all were satisfied ; and the fragments filled seven baskets. Then He sent the disciples away whilst He dismissed the people.

*Facts in my own Life*

How often my thought is the same as that of the disciples : How can I get out of doing a kindness to people ? My idea is often to get them away before I shall be obliged to entertain them ; before anything will be expected of me. I say to myself : " I really cannot be expected to do this or that. Let them look after themselves." But I see that my Lord takes the matter quite differently, and teaches His disciples to think what they can do rather than what they cannot do. He will help all to try to do what they can. He will be there, and render what would be lavishness without Him mere common politeness.

O Jesus ! how good of you to show me your way so clearly, and make me feel how far I am from following your lead ! how

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prone to think only of myself and my own comfort, how little to consider those who are in need! Charity in word and deed never really interferes with my own work ; and if it appears to do so I am not following my Lord if I make the interference evident. Teach me, Lord, to follow your own considerate way, giving myself and what I have to others when they need it.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me kind to all for your sake.

## XV

**He went up the Mountain alone***Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord had just worked a great miracle and shown that He had power over nature such as had seldom been exercised; He had multiplied the loaves so that one loaf fed a thousand people. Yet as soon as they had left Him He went alone to pray. No matter what His power or His occupation, He never omitted prayer, though for Him every wish was a prayer.

He had in view my case with all my occupation, partly self-imposed, and He wished to teach me not to fancy that I could abandon prayer. He had to thank His Father for the kindness He had been enabled to show to the people, and to beg for protection for His disciples, who were now in a storm on the lake.



*Facts in my own Life*

Have I learnt this lesson that my Lord so carefully and so constantly teaches me? I fear not; or at least that I have not learnt it thoroughly. I often make excuses about my prayers, or put them off till late, and then I cannot say them properly. A little more courage, a little more energy, and I might be much more regular. Then, again, do I thank God as much as I ought? Do I think of my friends during prayer, or only just repeat the words without any special reference to the needs of others? I do, indeed, pray for my special friends, but of all who are in distress, of all who are fainting in the way, &c., I think very little. Yet this is what our Lord teaches me. He had always compassion on the multitude. O Jesus! Lord of the whole earth, give me a little of your universal sympathy. I can show you at least in my prayers that I am attempting to follow you. In charity, indeed, there is little I can do.

You have not bestowed on me the means to give much, but you have given me the power of universal kindness in my prayers.

O Jesus! have mercy on the dying; bring aid to the failing; give joy to the sorrowful. Give me more your own spirit which is not confined to your friends, but reaches to all that need your help, even though they are estranged from you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, let me love all and pray for all.

## XVI

**The Wind was contrary***Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE disciples were quite accustomed to rough weather. They were used to fishing on the lake during the night when storms arose. They had gone at our Lord's bidding, and they knew they were still in His thoughts and prayers. They did not lose heart though He was not with them. They were glad of a good wind, and so long as they had that they did not much mind about the weather. Even when everything was against them they for the most part took things calmly after the manner of sailors. Our Lord chose His disciples from among sailors and fishermen because this calm manner was such a valuable ground to work on. When they came to

understand our Lord their trust in Him was boundless.

*Facts in my own Life*

How little calm there is in my way of acting. The smallest trifle puts me out, makes me discontented, destroys my calm. I long for some one to sympathize with me. I know quite well, if I will give myself time to think, that my Lord is not only in sympathy with me but is helping me, giving me grace upon grace. Graces which I heed so little; graces to enable me to forget myself and my little trials; graces to bind me to trust in Him and be distrustful of myself. What a lesson He gives in the calmness of these poor, ignorant men, who loved Him and thought little of themselves!

Dear Jesus, it is kind of you to take so much trouble over such a worthless thing as I am. Here am I, after coming so near to you, going away again, showing all my old want of calm and of trust, for calm-

ness comes from trust and cannot last without it.

Ah Jesus! am I losing my trust? Do not let me, dear Lord. I wish with all my heart to have a firm, an intense, an abiding trust in you. I may lose my trust in all else, but do not let me lose it in you. You will always be by me.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, help me; protect me; calm me.

## XVII

## He came walking on the Sea

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

ALL through the night He left them; and just as day was breaking He came to them. They were wearied with rowing, for the wind was contrary. They had slept little, for the sea was rough. And just as they were able to make out the shore and know where they were, they saw Him walking towards them, and they were afraid, thinking it was an apparition.

During the night they had borne the storm and His bodily absence, for they knew He was with them in spirit, but when He really came they were afraid.

*Facts in my own Life*

I am brave at times; I ask for hard things to do, and generally behave as if nothing

would upset me, and then when our Lord really does come—when with a little thought I could know that He is with me, and that He is asking some little self-restraint or extra charity to those of my own household—I get afraid, that is, flurried, and think it is not He but some other who is by me. Then I lose control of myself, either acting in an unrestrained way, or showing temper, or forgetting some quite plain precept of my Master. Ah me! how forgetful I am sometimes! I get perturbed over nothing when I should know that it is only a kindness on my Lord's part to show me how I ought to do some little thing for Him.

O Jesus! how patient you are with me, and how impatient I am with almost all with whom you have placed me!

I thank you, Lord, that you have not allowed me to be tormented with scruples. How could I have stood them? If in your kindness to me you ever subject me to such trouble, give me grace not to forget you; let me recognize you even then. Let me see

you at all times and be without fear as you come to me.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, my kind and good Lord, make me to trust you and not miss the moment of your coming.



## XVIII

## “ It is I ; fear ye not ”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as our Lord was within speaking distance He tried to alleviate the fear which had fallen upon the disciples with this beautiful sentence : “ It is I ; fear ye not.” In all His training of the disciples we see how He relied upon this childlike confidence. How few have I found in whom I could have real confidence ! These disciples had been thrown upon themselves by their trade ; in their boat on the lake they were frequently obliged to rely on themselves. A sudden storm threw them at once on their own resources. Our Lord had been trying to bring in another and a more stable and trustworthy source of strength. He and His law and His love were to be first, and their

own experience and strength second. "It is I ; fear ye not."

*Facts in my own Life*

Here is a lesson I can learn. I have been thrown in somewhat the same manner on myself. Early in life, perhaps, I was given responsibility without proper experience. I learnt to look to myself for extra work, and found, as so many in like circumstances find, that the more I relied on myself the less would any one help me. I have been proud of that I have done, but I have found later on that my work has not been so excellent as I once thought it. It will take me a long time, and cost me many trials before I learn to distrust myself, and to place my trust in my Lord, if I intend to make any progress in His love. In other small duties I could do the work required without much reference to my God ; but if I am to work for my own soul I must rely on Him.

O Jesus, how kind of you to take any

interest in me! You have been so kind to me, and so considerate, hitherto. I have met you with so little trust. But now that I hear you saying to me, “It is I; fear ye not,” I will trust you with my whole heart. Give me the grace to go to you without fear; and to go with you wherever you wish to lead me. Give me the grace not to draw back in your service.

*Aspiration.*—“It is I; fear ye not.”

## XIX

## Peter walking on the Water

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as Jesus had said, "It is I; fear ye not," St. Peter, as usual, wanted to test the truth of what our Lord said. Peter was always going his own way, and he was rebuked by our Lord for this more than for anything else. He tried to prevent our Lord going to Jerusalem to die for the salvation of men, and was rebuked by the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Then he tried to break in on our Lord's meek conduct in the Garden of Olives, and drawing a sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and was again rebuked.

During the Passion, Peter's trust in himself was punished by his fall and denial of our Lord, for which he wept during all the rest of his life. So here he would put to the

test our Lord's word, and our Lord to humble him allowed him to sink as soon as his heart failed him.

*Facts in my own Life*

Peter's way was almost always the wrong way; yet how he persisted in it! My way has proved very seldom right, and yet how I stick to it! How little good I have done either to myself or to others by following my own way! Yet how slow I am to take up another way, and how annoyed I still get if crossed! Our Lord has allowed me to walk confidently where others would be afraid to step; where others would have relied on advice, taken counsel and followed it, I have just gone my own way.

O Jesus, how kind and good you have been to me! How forbearing, when I have been overbearing with others! How meek, whilst I have been self-assertive! I do wish to learn and to practise your way in all things. You are teaching me, dear Lord

let me not grow weary of learning. I see so little progress that I am inclined to give up. Do not let me sink like St. Peter, but be ever ready to support me.

*Aspiration.*—Lord, save me or I perish.

## XX

## The Wind ceased

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord always brought peace to His friends. Though He said that He came not to bring peace but the sword, yet His last words to His disciples were: "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth peace do I give it unto you." To Peter He brought peace, sometimes through rebuke, sometimes by letting him see his weakness, sometimes by His sweet support after his fall, as in this instance. So to many of the sick and blind and lame in Israel did He bring peace. So it was here. The boat was calmed as soon as Jesus entered it.

*Facts in my own Life*

The effect of my presence is not by any means so peaceful. Very often I do not

bring any change at all, but sometimes I leave a company in a much less peaceful state than I found it. The secret of our Lord's peacefulness was that He gave relief to pain and anxiety. "Be of good heart, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee," is one of His sayings. There is relief in this and a taking away of annoyance, and a forgetting the cause of anxiety. Is my influence in the same direction? or is it not rather like rubbing a sore place? a calling attention to a neglect, an allusion to a fault. I know my tendency is always to remind people of what they ought to do or what they ought to have left undone. Our Lord did this at times, but opportunely, when it would not vex or annoy.

O Jesus! I feel hopeless in this matter. It is kind of you to remind me so often of my failure. I wish, Lord, to learn your sweet, peaceful way. Ah! if I could only put myself out of count as you did! if I could leave well alone when the striving after what I think the better will only bring annoyance. What would have happened,



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Lord, if every time I had been a little wrong you had suddenly called me to right it? I should have given up long since.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, help me to bring peace to all.

## XXI

## The Hem of His Garment

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

WHEN the boat came to shore the Apostles found themselves in the country of Genesar. As soon as our Lord was recognized, the people sent word into the whole country, and they brought all their sick to Him and besought Him simply to let them touch the hem of His cloak ; and as many as did so were healed. This was such a simple, child-like desire, so full of humility and confidence, that our Lord's heart went out to them, and His divine power healed them. Humility and confidence are the two virtues which He especially loves ; whenever He finds them He is always most generous in the favours He bestows. The reason He so loves these virtues is that with them He can teach all things—without them it is almost

impossible to teach anything. The picture our Lord gives us of the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is just the opposite ; He spoke it to those who "trusted in themselves as just and despised others," and the lesson He draws is that He could make nothing of such people. They had to be humbled and to lose confidence in themselves before His influence could touch them.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have been used to other ways than these. I have acted sometimes as if humility and confidence were not becoming to me ; as if they were childish instead of childlike. I still at times find it rather hard to put aside that trust of myself which has grown with my growth and been confirmed by my bringing up ; and I have wondered why I did not get nearer to our Lord. I was not content with the hem of His garment. I was not ready to give Him full confidence. I was not anxious to know what His will was, so much

as to show that what others had done I could do also. I was anxious not to be left behind, as I thought. Ah me! how much I have still to learn!

Dear Jesus, be kind to me. It is not pleasant to think these things, but if it be your will, let me be humbled, that I may learn to put my trust in you. The hem of your garment is good enough for me if by my humility and confidence I may find a way to your heart. Jesus, my Lord, be kind to me still. I do not deserve your kindness, but I trust in you. Make me humble. Make me as far as can be forgetful of myself. Make me content with little things so long as it is your will that I should gain your grace by little things.

*Aspiration.*—Lord, let me but touch the hem of your garment.

## XXII

## The People's Question

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE morning after the miracle of the loaves the people saw that the other ship which had been at the place of the miracle was still there, and they knew that Jesus had not gone in the Apostles' ship, but had remained to set them on their journey. They concluded that He had stayed the whole night in the hills praying, and so made as quickly as they could to the same place, seeking Him. They had experienced His kindness; the power of His words had gone to their hearts, and they were anxious to hear Him speak again to them. When they came to the scene of the miracle they could not find Him, so they took ship and came to Capharnaum. There they heard where He was, and sailing again across the lake they

came to Genesar. Coming to Jesus they asked for an explanation: "Rabbi, when comest Thou hither?" Here we have a sample of the earnestness and the persistence of all who seek our Lord and find Him. They follow as closely as they can. They do not hesitate to undergo fatigue. They are not content till they find Him.

*Facts in my own Life*

These people were only just beginning to know Jesus, and they took all these pains to get to Him. I have known Him, and persuaded myself that I have loved Him, for years, and yet how soon I get discouraged! The smallest rebuff, the slightest upset, and I cease to look for Him. I sit down and count the cost. I busy myself with myself. I recount to myself my difficulties; I omit my prayers; I make others feel how badly I am being used. These men just forgot themselves and made every effort to get to Jesus. Ah! if only I could keep up my efforts! If only I could go on in spite of

annoyance ! I must learn this. I do not mean just regularity in my prayers, but more the quiet, persistent effort to follow as closely as I can the example of my Lord.

O Jesus ! I thank you for rebuking my want of persistence. It is good of you not to tire of me, even though I grow weary at times and feel inclined to stop to rest by the way ; to leave for a time the path you have put me on, and go back to my own selfish, hard way. Do not lose sight of me, Lord. Still beckon me on ; still keep me near you. Encourage me to follow till I gain you for ever.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, draw me to yourself, and always keep me near you.

## XXIII

## Our Lord's Answer

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THE question the people put to our Lord was one of curiosity. They could not understand how He had got to Genesar, but they did not ask Him plainly, "How did you come here?" but "When did you come?" Our Lord would not satisfy their curiosity—He has very little regard for curiosity—they should have been contented to have found Him. It was always the same throughout His life. He never cared to satisfy curiosity; and in this instance He rebuked the people. They appeared to take interest in His teaching, but He told them that they were following Him because He had fed them: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth." He did not mince



matters, but spoke quite openly ; yet they were still curious : " Give us a sign that we may believe." They chose the test which would satisfy them, and reminded our Lord that Moses had given their fathers manna in the desert. Our Lord replied by teaching them the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have not recognized in my life how little my Lord likes curiosity, nor how much it takes hold of me sometimes. It seems part of my nature ; I seem scarcely able to keep it under—what so and so is doing ; why he or she did not do such and such a thing. Such little things seem of so much importance. And why is it so ? Not because I am really any better when my curiosity is satisfied, but because I just like to know. It is such a waste of time, and so fruitless !

O Jesus ! I thank you for this rebuke which you have given me. If only I were half as earnest in getting to know you as I am in trying to know some little useless fact,

some bit of gossip, some unimportant bit of news !

Pardon me, Lord, and give me the grace to practise self-restraint in this matter. I see you do not like my curiosity. Pardon me for the past, and help me in the future.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, let me think of you and be content.

## XXIV

## “This Saying is hard”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

As soon as the people were quiet, our Lord began to explain to them the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament, and they questioned His every assertion. Very patiently He went on to explain that a firm faith is necessary before the effects of the Body and Blood of our Lord can be wrought in the communicant. Then He asserted the fact that He would give His Body for the meat of those who desire to have life everlasting. This the people rejected as impossible. They had asked for a sign that He was as great as Moses, and when He gave them what they required they refused to believe, and some murmured. He might have tempered what He had said, but He would not, for He was now delivering the message given to Him by

His Father. He therefore once more asserted that His Flesh and His Blood were to be the nourishment of the world. Therefore many of His followers murmured, saying, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" Jesus simply repeated His doctrine, and then gave the secret of their incredulity, that is, that they had not merited the grace from His Father by which they might believe.

*Facts in my own Life*

The faith of these men failed because they had failed to be faithful in their daily lives, and my practice fails for the same reason. I have not deserved to be helped. I know, for instance, quite clearly that I shall be rewarded for my constancy of effort in restraining my appetite for things which do me no good by an enlivening of my faith which will carry me through the day in the close intimacy with my Lord; yet I will not correspond with the grace given, and thus fail to gain the further grace. I know quite well that if I am careful over my prayers I shall do good for

my Father who is in heaven; but I let almost anything take me from my prayers, if not bodily, at least mentally, and then I wonder that I have not power to control my temper or keep myself from interfering where my interference only creates annoyance and does no good to any one.

O Jesus! let me be more particular in the future. I see every hour of my life has a relation to every other, and that I cannot be truly faithful at one time unless I am faithful in all.

Strengthen my weakness. How weak I am, only you know, Lord. Be kind to me. I wish to be your own faithful child; let me have all the graces necessary. Do not reject me for my carelessness.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me faithful.

## XXV

**Many went back***Facts in our Lord's Life*

THESE backsliders must have caused our Lord a great deal of pain. He had come to teach them and to save them, but unless they received the teaching, or at least did not wilfully reject it, He would not give them the salvation. They had quite sufficient grounds to believe His word. They had seen Him perform a very wonderful miracle when He multiplied the loaves and fed five thousand people with five small loaves. Yet because they could not understand, or because they were afraid that He would expect more from them than they were ready to give, they turned their backs on Him and left Him. What it meant to them to leave Him they scarcely knew. How many falls from grace! How much blindness of heart!

Some of these men, perhaps, swelled the cry of the crowd—"Crucify Him." Ah me! how little we count the cost of a deliberate infidelity to our Lord! He is goodness itself, and even though we turn our backs on Him and leave Him, He is ready to receive us again at once if we will walk with Him once more.

*Facts in my own Life*

Do I count what it may mean to me when I am wilfully unfaithful to my Lord? I know it is only in seemingly little things that I have any temptation to turn from Him. I find no difficulty in accepting His word in matters of faith, but I am constantly finding it hard in the little crosses of life. Just a little charity not to impute a base motive to some one's action; just a little restraint not to speak when I know my words will only irritate; and I refuse to make the sacrifice, to listen to my Lord urging me. Just a little care not to meddle in other people's business, and I insist on interfering.

O Jesus! I do not wish to turn my back on you; I do not want to leave you; I wish to walk with you always. I am so weak and so easily turned from the path you point out to me. Do not let me leave you, Lord; and if I ever do, let it be only for a moment—not for long, O Lord; not for long! Let me appreciate the danger I run by my small infidelities.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, keep me close to you in life, and be with me at death and then for ever.



## XXVI

## “Will you also go?”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

How our Lord was grieved by the desertion of His followers is evident in the touching question He puts to the chosen twelve: “Will you also go?” It was a crucial point in His life. He had exerted His miraculous power by feeding the multitude in the desert, and then walking on the water to lead up to the doctrine He had most at heart—the central mystery of the new dispensation; and in spite of all His care a great number of His followers left Him and walked no more with Him. It seemed as if failure stared Him in the face. Still, He held to His doctrine; even if the twelve had left Him, after all His kindness and love, He would have set to work to train others to do His work. The answer to His question meant a great deal to

Him, but He did not lose heart and give up the struggle as I would have done. His "Will you also go?" brought out all the faith of the band, and Peter spoke for all: "To whom shall we go?" And Jesus let us see that it was what He expected.

*Facts in my own Life*

I fancy I am not easily put off from anything I take up, and, indeed, it is true in things which are appreciated or that I have got into the way of doing. But in my religious or spiritual life it is somewhat different. Sometimes I have given up for long periods some of these exercises, such as meditation, spiritual reading, etc. I have not thought much of each little neglect, and have been rather shocked at times to find it has stretched over so many days or weeks. I always have an excuse, though I know it has scarcely ever been a valid one. For instance, in my spiritual reading I have often been negligent because I have not taken the trouble to get a suitable book, though I willingly

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take such little trouble over some temporal matter. I do not take trouble, though I know my Lord demands it of me.

O Jesus! make me more constant in my service of you. I see how little I have deserved the grace of perseverance, which is the crown of fidelity in small things. I will try, Lord, to take the trouble necessary to secure my few minutes' spiritual reading.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me more constant.

## XXVII

“Lord, to whom shall we go?”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

OUR Lord came from heaven to take us all back with Him. He attached the disciples to Himself, and of all His disciples He chose out twelve quite ordinary men to be His special friends. When He had died for love of man He drew many more to Himself: “I will draw all to Myself.” He did not draw men for His own sake but for theirs. These twelve were the sample of so many who in future time should feel the attraction of His life and of His words, and cleave closely to Him. He longs for all, but many do not allow themselves to feel the power of this attraction. They are taken up with work for themselves, or with self-love, and they will not give a fair chance to that love of Him which would attract them

and make true men and women of them. If they do so there is no limit to the love our Lord bestows on them, as from this time to His death He never left His disciples except to pray and to suffer.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have felt the attraction of my Lord for years. I have not given it a fair chance, indeed, but I have never wilfully or for a long time left Him, and He has shown His love in ways I am quite conscious of. He has allowed me to come to Him very frequently in Holy Communion, He has been very kind to me at such times, but all the same I have not been as faithful or as careful as I ought when He has been so lavish with His favours. How little I have deserved His love and goodness, yet He has freely given them to me.

O Jesus! it is good of you to take me so to yourself. It has been heartless of me not to be more faithful, more loving in return. I have been attracted to other things. By

your grace I have never wholly left you, but I have been cold in my service, loth to listen to your voice. I have so often put obstacles in your way that I have at times endangered the permanence of my love. I do not wish to leave you, my Lord and Master. Make me more whole-hearted in your service.

*Aspiration.*—To whom shall I go but to you?

## XXVIII

## “One of you is a Devil”

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

DURING the whole of our Lord's missionary life He was in constant communication with Judas, who was to betray Him. See with what care He tried to bring the best out of him. Judas had every chance that the rest had; he was not, indeed, admitted to the inner circle consisting of Peter, James, and John; but neither were the other apostles. He had the advantage of those long talks with our Lord which must have been so precious to one who was anxious to learn how to live and to do God's work. He was more trusted than the rest, for he was the one chosen to provide for all. And all the time he was a devil. All the time our Lord knew him for what he was. It is the most terrifying incident in our Lord's life that He

should have been so kind to, so careful in the training of, Judas, knowing that He was to be a viper in His bosom. It should make me very careful about my sincerity in serving Him.

*Facts in my own Life*

Have I in no way acted the part of Judas? It is not good for me, I know, to dwell on such thoughts often, but it is a part of our Lord's message to me, and I must at times face the question. Some have thought that Judas did not wish to betray our Lord, but simply to force Him to assert His power. In this view though he might have been and was mistaken and perverse, he was no traitor. In other and more catholic views Judas is one who had every opportunity of becoming a saint, and was not faithful in his service: he grew fonder and fonder of money so that at last he was not able to resist the temptation to make money out of his Friend and Master. Here I have something I can take to myself—not that I am over-fond of money; but is



there no other hindrance to my love of our Lord that I am letting grow stronger and stronger without seeing where it is going to lead me? If there is, I must be doubly on my guard, for my Lord is asking me now to beware lest I betray Him.

O Jesus! be kind to me and let me not by any act of mine betray you. Let nothing, however small, however dear, stand between us. It is kind of you to frighten me a little now and then lest I should forget myself and your great kindness to me. Should I ever be going to betray you, oh, do not let me. I will listen to you, and I will be on my guard.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, have mercy on me and pardon me, and strengthen me in the future.

## XXIX

## The Objection of the Pharisees

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

ALL through His life our Lord was particular about the observance of the law, but He made a distinction between the law and the sectarian and peculiar practices of the Pharisees. This one, of always washing before meals, is one we might have expected our Lord to be particular about ; but though He loved cleanliness as much as any Pharisee, He would not answer them when they came to ask Him why He did not insist on His disciples washing their hands before sitting down to a meal. Our Lord told them that it was not such things which really counted in life, but the words and thoughts of the heart. The Pharisees thought that all who were not zealous for the law

(according to their sect) were reprobate. Our Lord tells them that they have no right to judge His disciples, as what really was important was within and hidden from them.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have set up a standard by which I condemn many of those I come across. I see now that I can never be sure that they may not be pleasing to God even though they displease me. All have not had as good opportunities as I have of knowing the right, though God knows I have made very little use of my opportunities. Perhaps if I took more notice of my own deficiencies and less of my neighbour's, I should be pleasing God more. It is not external behaviour which is of value, but gentleness and kindness of heart.

O Jesus! let me learn to judge myself strictly and all others lightly. Let me change my usual plan of having justice only for my neighbour and mercy only for myself.

Help me, dear Lord ! I see it is your way ; I know, therefore, it ought to be my way, for in all things I want to follow you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me merciful to others.

## XXX

## The Canaanite Woman

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

THERE came to Him a woman of those parts, beseeching Him to heal her daughter. And Jesus took no notice of her. But she went on crying out after Him so much that the disciples begged Him to send her away. And Jesus turning to her said, "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." But she cried out simply, "Lord, help me." Jesus again refused her, saying, "It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." Still she persisted: "Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs which fall from the table of their master." Our Lord was touched, and said, "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt." And her daughter was cured from that hour. Here we see our Lord bringing

out before His disciples the best qualities of this poor woman. They were for turning her away, but He did not allow this. He only gave her an opportunity of showing how great was her faith. He even used what to her must have sounded hard and unkind words; but really they were kind words, because they brought out all that was admirable in her—her love of her daughter; her courage to brave even rebuke and abuse for that love; her great faith in the power and the mercy of our Lord.

*Facts in my own Life*

How seldom my words and actions bring out the best in those I have to deal with! I look for faults and find them. If I were to look for goodness, I should, no doubt, find that quite as easily. It takes me a long time to learn this lesson which my Lord is so persistent in teaching me. In my own people how often others see virtue and goodness when I only find reason for annoyance!

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O Jesus! let me begin now at least, though late, to have an eye for what is good and worthy of praise in others, instead of only for what seems to me to be blameable. If others were to treat me as I treat them, how should I escape blame? I feel it intensely when only my omissions are noticed, and what I have done well is passed by. May not others feel the same? Give me, dear Lord, your own kind eyes for all that is good in those whom I have to deal with.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, make me kind in my thoughts and my words.

## XXXI

## Jesus passed from thence

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

“AND when Jesus had passed away from thence He came nigh to the Sea of Galilee.” How very much of our Lord's life is contained in such a sentence as the above! He went all the way from Capharnaum to the sea-coast seemingly just to receive the declaration of faith of the poor mother of Canaan, and we hear nothing else of His doings. Of course there must have been many incidents, but we are not told them. St. John says that if everything which our Lord did and every word He spoke were recorded the whole world could not contain the books. In our modern life we advertise ourselves so much. Every little thing which can bring us praise, or even attention which



is not always praise, is remembered and brought out in conversation. It is to avoid this kind of thing that religious have to keep silence at meals, the worst time of the day for self-advertisement and for uncharitable depreciation of others.

*Facts in my own Life*

I have been a good deal to blame in this matter. If I do not tell the whole table my own good deeds I am not particular to keep them altogether to myself. I use the chance for pouring out all kinds of gossip, some of it not always charitable. I find it rather hard not to boast of what I have done, and am never unwilling to hear others exaggerate what I think is to my credit; for, after all, it does require a little exaggeration before my acts can be praised at all.

O Jesus! I thank you for all your kindness and forbearance with me, which I so little deserve. I will try, after your example, to keep what I do to myself, especially when I know that I should get praise for it. I

will try not to be vexed when I am not praised; when my work is criticized and shown to be poor.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours.

## XXXII

## A Day of Healing

*Facts in our Lord's Life*

“AND there came to Him a great multitude, having with them the dumb and blind, etc., and cast them down at His feet.” See how little is made of a long day of healing. To go from one to the other, to speak kindly to each, was the method which our Lord used on other occasions, and we may well believe that He did the same now. It was a long, fatiguing process, and nothing is said of it. We can see Him always cheerful, thoughtful of each, kind and considerate to each. He was not glad when each of the loathsome patients was finished with: He was just self-forgetful, and thoughtful only of those who were before Him. What a lesson!

*Facts in my own Life*

How differently I deal with the poor and with those that I help! How much of self

I bring into my charity! For example, I prefer to go to some before others; I am glad when my visit is over; I say, "I have finished that, thank goodness!" I am considering myself, and self only, all the time. "Do they care for my coming? Do they think any better of me?" If only I could just forget myself, my little charities would be so much more welcome. I know this is the case with people whom I like to visit. I never ask myself whether they think any better of me for coming. Ah! if only I could put aside this miserable self! O my good Lord! how patient you are with me! How much I think of a little, and it is so little I do for you! There are you toiling all day and every day for others without any thought of yourself, and what recognition did you get? None, or scarcely any; and the very ones you were kind to turned against you.

*Aspiration.*—Jesus, teach me to be forgetful of myself, and to think only of you and your friends.

SIMPLE AIDS  
TO THE DEVOUT RECITATION OF  
THE ROSARY



Simple Aids  
to the Devout Recitation of  
The Rosary

By the Right Rev.  
JOSEPH OSWALD SMITH  
Abbot of Ampleforth

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY  
69 Southwark Bridge Road  
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## INTRODUCTION

### How to Say the Rosary

THERE is little doubt that much time is wasted over the Rosary of our Lady, because those who use it will not allow themselves time enough to say it well.

If the Rosary were carefully said, it would help us, perhaps, more than any other vocal prayer to bring the life of our Lord into our own lives.

No one can teach us the real meaning of that life and its application to our own so well as our Lady, for she of all others knew the life of our Lord best, and takes the most interest in our life.

Let us take her, then, as our guide, and ask her in all simplicity that, whilst she listens to our prayers, she would teach us

the life and spirit of her Son. If we trust her she will most certainly help us. The holy Rosary, used reverently and devoutly, is the best means of putting ourselves under the guidance of our Mother in our study of the life of our Lord.

To allow the life of our Lord a chance of being before our minds whilst we pray, a more detailed presentation of the mysteries of the Rosary than is usual becomes necessary. The mere statement, "the Third Mystery, the Nativity," which is so often deemed sufficient, is, from my own experience, plainly not so.

In the method which follows an attempt has been made to place each mystery more vividly before the mind, and to present it in such a way that we may see how it may concern ourselves. This detailed presentment of the mystery may be valuable to us also, apart from the use it serves in the devout recitation of the holy Rosary. It will help us in meditation if we are accustomed to practise that form of mental prayer ; and

it will, moreover, give us a means of studying the spirit of our Lord's life as it concerns ourselves. Thus it will lay the foundation of that prayer of aspiration to which all devout souls should tend. This prayer of aspiration is one which I find many devout souls unwilling to practise. Its very freedom, which the older masters of the spiritual life looked upon as one of its great virtues, is to so many who have been accustomed to modern methods of meditation a cause of suspicion. Why this is so it is difficult to understand. My own belief is that many devout souls waste a great deal of time in the prayer of meditation which they might most profitably employ for their souls' good and for the benefit of others if they would have the courage to pass out of meditation to the prayer of aspiration.

The great masters of prayer tell us that after a sufficient exercise of meditation the soul which is called to the exercise of mental prayer, and through it to union with God, should by the use of acts of the will occupy

more and more of the time devoted to meditation, leaving gradually the direct work of the understanding and trusting itself to the goodness and kindness of God, pass immediately from the presentation of a fact in our Lord's life (or other matter of their prayer) to fervent acts of the will. By degrees these immediate acts, as they are called, lead the soul to more pure acts which have little or no connection with the fact or mystery considered, until it comes to pass that acts of resignation, desire of God's presence, longing for a time when all infidelity of life will pass away, &c., become the constant habit of the soul. After all, the good God does not need the thoughts of our minds or understanding, but in many passages of Holy Scripture He has shown that He does most intensely desire the acts of our will. The submission of our will under His holy guidance leads us necessarily to the prayer of aspiration.

The next point is to convince ourselves that the "Hail Mary" is not a mere formula. This has been made plain, I hope,

in the address which is written after the statement of the mystery. Herein I have attempted to show that the "Hail Mary" contains the elements of all the prayers we may wish to offer to our Lady, asking her to help us to learn our Lord's life, and to bring the spirit of it into our own.

But, more than this, I have tried to show how the "Hail Mary" may be used in the prayer of immediate acts.

When reading the paraphrase over it will be well to dwell on any thought which may strike one in order to give that thought a chance of recurring to one's mind at other times. As the habit of calling to mind the thoughts which were fruitful during the time of prayer grows it will be followed by the habit of raising the heart to God in fervent aspirations. The growth of this habit, fostered by humility and kindness, will speedily prepare the soul for the prayer of aspiration, and then the aspirations used during the time given to prayer will overflow into the rest of the life till we come to actually

fulfil St. Paul's precept of praying without ceasing.

It will be well for those who have the time to read the paraphrase on the "Hail Mary" which is given for each mystery; and if it expresses the meaning they would wish the "Hail Mary" to have, to keep at least one of the petitions in mind whilst the decade is being said.

Some may feel inclined to use these mysteries and prayers for the daily meditation; and if they appeal to any individual they may be used very profitably in this way. Any well-known vocal prayer can be turned in this manner into profitable mental prayer.

I can well imagine that many who are living busy, active lives will be inclined to put aside this little book as evidently not meant for them. Many lives are so busy that a suggestion that extra time is needed for a particular exercise is deemed a sufficient reason for leaving that exercise alone. Now in the case of the holy Rosary so many have



formed the habit of saying it daily that if one can see how the recitation can be improved appreciably, and the time required for that improvement is shown to be inconsiderable, perhaps even the busiest may be induced to take that necessary time.

The busiest people can find time for a quarter of an hour once a week—say on Sunday afternoon. One quarter of an hour once a week spent carefully over one decade of the Rosary, will go a long way towards making the recitation during the rest of the week more real and more of a prayer than it was before ; and in about three months all the decades of the Rosary will have been gone through. If we have not much time it is impossible to learn a lesson quickly, but with a little time used perseveringly and patiently much can be done.

After each mystery I have added a few acts which may be used with profit by such as feel themselves drawn to this kind of prayer.



# THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

## 1. The Annunciation

PICTURE our Lady praying in her room or in the little garden. The subject of her prayer, as ever, is that she may become more united to God. The angel appears, and Mary is afraid, not because of his presence but because of the honour he shows her. She does not know how the design of God revealed to her by the angel is to be accomplished, but she immediately resigns herself into God's hands: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word." She recognizes at once how greatly her consent will further God's work in the world and in the souls of men. She sees that it is to be through Jesus that men are to be united to God.

*Hail, Mary!* for the kindness of thy consent to be the means of bringing Jesus to me. *Full of grace*, for the Source of all grace has come to thee. *The Lord is with thee* all thy holy life by desire; most intimately and actually for the nine months thou didst bear Him in thy womb; and in the most perfect union with thee during His life upon earth, which is only more perfect now in heaven. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, chosen by God as the means of bringing His Son nearer to all men. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. In Him we are united to our Beginning and our last End, God, blessed for ever. *Holy Mary, Mother of God*, great though thy dignity be, think not of thyself only as I have done so often, but of us all, of me. *Pray for us sinners*, for me so unworthy, so careless hitherto to imitate thy love and holiness. Do not leave me any longer without thy Son. Let me never leave Him by negligence, by self-seeking, by conceit. *Now*, when I so much need help and

encouragement; *and* do not forget me *at the hour of my death*. Keep me in thy hand at that hour and show me thy Son. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, united to your Mother, draw me also near to you.

Mary, my Mother, keep me united to your Son. When shall I leave all that keeps me from you, my Lord and my God? Make my will all yours. Do not become tired of me, Lord, because of my want of fidelity.

## 2. The Visitation

MARY and Joseph, hearing of their cousin Elizabeth's joy, go to congratulate her. In the hill country, quite apart from the world, these friends of God meet. They are almost His only friends on earth. Mary and Jesus with her are, as usual, thinking of others, rejoicing with those that rejoice, sympathizing with those who suffer and sorrow. Not only the extraordinary joys and troubles attract their sympathy and their love, but the daily, common wants of life. Our Lord and His holy Mother wish to have part in every little event of our lives. They wish to be friends to us at all times, and only require us to be ready to take them into our confidence. They only wait for our will. They have come to the home

of St. Elizabeth that Mary may assist her and comfort her. Do thou also, dear Mother, come to me in my need and bring thy constant quiet joy with thee !

Our Lady was able to do much for her cousin; much quiet household work which only St. Elizabeth could appreciate. Many a little burden she could take which was a relief to her aged cousin. It was these little works of kindness that our Lord rewarded so signally by revealing to St. Elizabeth the great dignity of His Mother.

*Hail, Mary !* I greet thee for thy kindness to St. Elizabeth and to me in all my trials and in all my joys. *The Lord is with thee*, and thou wilt bring Him to me. Bring me also to Him, good Mother. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, bringing joy to all. Bring to me also the joy of thy Son's presence. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. His delight as thine is to be with the children of men. Ask Him to encourage me in despondency, to strengthen me in failure, to support me in

effort, and to crown me and those who are kind to me in heaven. *Holy Mary*, so close to God, tell me of His loving care for me, which I have scarcely realized. *Mother of God*, revealing Him to me, draw me to Him more and more. *Pray for us sinners*, do not abandon me if I ever withdraw myself from thy divine Son and thee. *Now*, when I have to struggle and take such pains to be faithful ; now, when I need so much help. *And at the hour of my death*, come with thy Son and His priest. Teach me to see thy visitation then and to rejoice in it. Make my death the happy entrance into thy company for ever. Be kind to me in life ; be kind to me in death, and make me kind as thou wert to all. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, draw me to imitate your divine Mother in my love of those who are related to me. When shall I be able to leave myself and care for others?

Dear Mother Mary, cause of our joy, teach me to bring joy to all. Teach me to



leave myself. Let me share your Son with you. Let me share Him who when on earth went about doing good. Kind God, make me kind always.

### 3. The Nativity

PICTURE the scene to yourself. The rough cave, as comfortable as the short time St. Joseph had for preparation would allow him to make it. The ox, which was stabled there, giving up its manger. The ass which had carried our Lady from Nazareth. There is a shelter indeed, but little else. The good God is satisfied with so little if the heart is given to Him.

Our Lady is contemplating her divine child in the manger. This is the first time that Mary has seen her Son; the first time our Lord has used His eyes to look at her face. How His eyes must have ached for a sight of Mary, His Mother! In her arms He can only half see her, so for both their sakes it is better He should be at a little distance. Then again, He wants to see

St. Joseph, and all that he has done for the comfort of Mary and Himself. He knows it all already, but not by human means, and this is what He came for, to lead me by human means to His Father. It is only for a few moments He need be laid in the manger, for He sees everything so quickly. How His eyes change as He sees the eyes of Mary! What an infinite love is in them! He holds out His little hands to her; He must know her through those too, and in her He knows us. Then as He stretches out His arms to His Mother she takes Him to her breast, and the few moments of separation have but added to the fervour of her embrace.

*Hail, Mary*, the first object of the human eyes of Jesus, beg Him to cast those loving eyes on me. *Full of grace*, both natural and spiritual, the object of the eyes of Jesus. *The Lord is with thee*. Thou hast Him all to thyself, and yet thou art anxious that we should share Him with thee, because it was

for us thou didst bring Him forth. Keep me near Him always. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, in the sight and hearing and near presence of the Source of all blessing. Share thy blessedness with me. I have thought of Him so little; now at least I wish to know Him and love Him with my eyes, my hands, my lips and my whole person. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*, the cause of all our joy. *Holy Mary, Mother of God* and my Mother, show me thy Son that I may love Him, and that nothing may ever come between us. *Pray for us sinners*, for me, so careless, so forgetful of thy Son. Pray for me, lest having known, I may forget Him and let self come in again. *Now*, as I see my Jesus; now, that I have turned to Him and need all thy tender love to keep me in His sight, *And at the hour of my death*, that then I may never leave Him, but be with Him for ever. *Amen.*

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*Acts.*—O Lord my God, why cannot I give you the little you are asking of me? It is so little and yet I hesitate. It will cost me a little restraint. Take it, Lord, for your Mother's sake. Make me so full of love that I shall no longer hesitate. O Jesus, fill me with your own resignation, your own detachment. Draw me to you. I will try to work for you, to forget myself.

#### 4. The Presentation

OUR Lady had to offer her Son to God in the Temple; and when He had been accepted by the priests in God's name she was allowed to purchase Him back again. She did so by offering two doves, which offering was considered by the law to be within the means of the poor. Our Lady was ready, nay anxious, to give all she had, but she was pleased to show us that He may be purchased by the poor in spirit for such little things. At the ceremony there are present—Jesus, making a full oblation of Himself to His Father for us; Mary, showing her love by offering her Son to God, and yet glad to have Him back again, hers once more, and hers by another title; Joseph, quietly contemplating the scene, and

carrying the doves, the price of the redemption of Jesus ; Simeon, full of joy because God has been so good to him as to let him see the Christ ; content now to die—"Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation." Lastly, Anna, the prophetess, carefully watching all so that she may tell the good news to others. .

*Hail, Mary, full of grace*, ready to make whatever sacrifice God demanded, obtain for me the strength to make any sacrifice asked of me—of my own will in little things ; of my comfort of body ; of the comfort of intercourse with those I love. Help me to see that these little sacrifices are the price I have to pay to bring my Lord back to me. *The Lord is with thee*, not to be separated from thee for years. Get me the grace never to lose Him again by my infidelity. *Blessed art thou amongst women*. Blessed for showing me how little I have to do to have thy Son

with me. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary*, so united in will to the will of God. *Mother of God* and my Mother, thinking of me, interested in me, ready to bring me to Jesus. *Pray for us sinners*, for me, so slow to sacrifice my time, my inclinations, my prejudices for the sake of Jesus. Pray for me that I may help others to Jesus. Never let me rob any one in the slightest degree of the intercourse of Jesus. *Now*, while I am living in the strength of the sacrifices made by thee and thy Son. *And at the hour of my death*, that I may be ready to leave all that I love on this earth and come to thee and Jesus. Offer me then to thy Son that I may be taken to His Sacred Heart for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, I offer you myself, worthless though I am. Receive me at the hands of your Mother, and give me back to her that she may teach me all you would have me know. I do offer you, Lord, all I am, all that I desire, all that I can do. It is so



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little, Lord ; let me offer it in company with you that it may be of value because this offering is made in union with you. Do not reject my offering, Lord. Make me sincere in my oblation. Let me keep nothing back.

## 5. The Finding in the Temple

TRUSTING our Lord thoroughly, our Lady and St. Joseph pursued quite contentedly their first day's journey out of Jerusalem. There were many groups in which our Lord might be. He might be with His relations from the little town of Nazareth. They had no fear for Him. They busied themselves, no doubt, in conversation about Him. They were united in prayer with Him. He was not with them indeed, but they were not afraid of Him as our parents were of us when we were children. And so during the whole day they were going further and further away from Him, unsuspecting their loss. Towards evening when they had selected a spot to rest for the night, Jesus was not with them, and they went about

from one group to another of their friends and acquaintances seeking Him. Then at last the full blow fell upon them. He was not to be found. Blaming themselves they went from tent to tent, again from group to group, and at last wearied out they waited for the morning. When morning came they retraced their steps as quickly as possible, but not neglecting to inquire wherever there was a halting-place. How often they described Him to strangers whom they met on the road! How minutely they told His features, His dress, His manner! And all in vain! When they came to Jerusalem there was still enough light to enable them to go from house to house where He was at all likely to be, but still in vain. Again blaming themselves they spent the night in prayer and watchfulness. They still hoped, but the light of their life was gone. Jesus was lost. They blamed themselves, though they knew it was through no fault of theirs He was separated from them. The next morning as soon as it was light they sought

Him in the old places where they had been already, and they tried to think of houses they may have overlooked. They were hot and weary when they went up into the Temple, and there in a small side chamber they found Him among the doctors about His Father's business.

*Hail, Mary*, so disconsolate at the loss of Jesus, make me feel what it is to have Him with me so that I may be able to take infinite pains not to lose Him. *Full of grace* and sustained by grace through those bitter days; sustain me if I should seem to lose Jesus by dryness in prayer. Sustain me, dear Mother, when my hour of trial comes. *The Lord is with thee*, for thou didst never doubt His goodness even when He left thee. Give me thy help, dear Mother, that I may never doubt my Lord whatever trial He may send me. Teach me to trust Him always, knowing that though I may feel desolate and disconsolate He is about His Father's business. *Blessed art thou amongst women,*

teaching us to bear what God sends us for our good.

*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Blessed when kind, blessed when seemingly hard, blessed art Thou, Jesus, whatever happens. *Holy Mary*, even in dejection united in will to God; encouraging St. Joseph. *Mother of God*, left when there was a question of His Father's business in order to teach me to be willing to be left by all I love if it is God's will. *Pray for us sinners* who think so much of ourselves, and so little of our Father's business. Pray that I may earnestly seek Jesus if I lose Him. Teach me to seek Him in all the common occupations of life, that at least I may find Him in prayer and go down to Nazareth with Him and live familiarly with Him all my life. *Now*, even if everything seems easy, that I may gain the grace to bear up when my loss comes. *And at the hour of my death*, pray for me and also for those whom no one loves but Thy Son and thee, that then we may find

Jesus and go home with Him for ever.  
*Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, how often I have lost you, and lost you through my own fault! Grant that I may never lose you again. But if it be your holy will to take yourself from me for a time, grant, sweet Lord, that I may seek you till I find you. Let me find you, dear Jesus, especially in the temple of my own heart. Be constant about your Father's business there, that I may love you and serve you with my whole heart.

## THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

### 1. The Agony in the Garden

THE Last Supper was finished. Our Lord had spoken to the disciples and offered His last prayer in company with them. He led the Apostles out into the Garden of Gethsemane, and retiring into the recesses of the garden with Peter and James and John, He left them also, for the burden He was now to take on Himself He alone could bear. He wished, indeed, for their sympathy and for ours, but the burden of the sins of the world was one He would carry Himself. Retiring a little, He allowed the sight of all the sins of the whole world to be present before Him. All my sins He

would look upon, not in general only but in detail. The union of His human mind with His divine nature enabled Him to make every sin of mine the object of His whole attention. My forgotten sins. The sins I have not acknowledged. The sins I have tried to hide even from myself. He saw them all, and the sight was so appalling that His Precious Blood forced itself through the pores of His skin and stood in drops upon His brow and fell like tears to the ground. His human heart forced Him to come to me in the persons of His chosen disciples for sympathy and I had none to give Him. Thrice He came and thrice I was indifferent, and yet in spite of my sins which were torturing Him, and in spite of my coldness He would go on with His Passion, for He loved me with an infinite love, a love that even my unfaithfulness could not quench.

In our Lady He saw no sin, no want of thoroughness, no unfaithfulness. Her He would not have by Him lest He might forget



my sin, my want of love. To her I will have recourse that she may teach me to imitate her innocence and her constant fidelity.

*Hail, Mary!* sinless one, and yet ready to bear the burden of my sins for love of me. *Full of grace*, never sullied by sin thyself, strong to bear the effects of my sin. *The Lord is with thee*, not bodily in this mystery, but in spirit, for thou alone wert like Him in thy purity and in thy capacity to bear with the sins of the world. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, exercising a true woman's prerogative, bearing pain and distress for others. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. Blessed by all men, but by me especially, to whom He has been so good and so kind. *Holy Mary*, with thy heart ever directed to God thy Son; *Mother of God* and my Mother, loving me a poor sinner, though I caused thy Son and thee such suffering. *Pray for us sinners*, for me, so careless of the pain my sins may cause.

*Now*, that I may grieve for all the suffering I have caused thy Son and thee. *And at the hour of my death*, that I may then receive the fruit of all thy love. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, how could you be so kind to me who am so sinful, so faithless? How can you still bear with me? I do not deserve your love, Lord. I am not worth your pains. Still do not abandon me. Jesus, I rely on you. You have borne the sight of my sins and wept tears of blood over them. Give me tears of repentance that I may be united to you at least in mourning over my own sins.

Dear Mother, sinless Virgin, love me still, and help me in spite of myself.

## 2. The Scourging at the Pillar

No sooner had Pilate consented to the death of our Lord than he delivered Him to the soldiers to be scourged. Barabbas had been chosen and our Lord had been rejected. The soldiers bound our Lord to the pillar, and taking off the garment with which Herod had clothed Him they brought thongs and scourges, and in relays they most cruelly scourged Him. He was in the power of the Roman soldiery, and therefore the limit prescribed by the Jewish law did not apply to Him. He was scourged, we are told, as a slave. The Roman soldiers quartered in Jerusalem, would have no delicacy in the brutal punishment they were inflicting. They were practised in the art of inflicting punishment with the scourge. They were, as some contemplatives tell us, bribed to

make our Lord suffer the greatest possible torture. When they were weary of their brutal sport there was no sound spot left on His back or His chest. His body was one bleeding sore.

Our Lord had no need to undergo this excessive torment. It did not redeem man. Man was redeemed by the blood our Lord shed on the cross, by His death on the cross. This previous shedding of His blood was redundant. It did not atone for sin. What object, then, could He have had? He wished to show us how much He loved us, and loved each soul, for He saw that these excessive, superabundant, and seemingly useless sufferings would help us to gauge the depth of His love; and He also saw some of us, myself in particular, ready to find excuses for not doing or suffering something which we see will help some other soul to love Him, but which we find a difficulty or distaste in doing.

Mary was not present in body at the scourging, but she was united to Him most

closely in the will to do and suffer whatever might help a single soul to love God more. She was always with Him, and in this spirit she united herself to Him during the bitter scourging.

*Hail, Mary!* ever ready to do God's will, ever ready to sacrifice thyself, ready to take up difficult and unselfish methods when thou didst see thou mightst help a soul to love thy Son. *Full of grace*, obtain for me the grace to be generous in the service of God. *The Lord is with thee*. Show Him also to me. Show me His meekness, His love, His ungrudging, unselfish service. Show me all these beauties of His character that I may learn to follow Him even when He asks me hard things which go against the grain. *Blessed art thou amongst women*. Blessed in being so close a follower of thy Son in gentle care of such a negligent, self-loving child as I am. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. Did He not give thee, dear Mother, all these qualities that He

might take them from thee, His Mother? Thy generosity it was that He inherited, thy love. *Holy Mary*, sanctified by putting God first always, and thyself second. *Mother of God* and devoted to Him as only a mother can be; watching every opportunity of pleasing Him, no matter what trouble or pain or annoyance it may cost. *Pray for us sinners*, for me most selfish, most ungenerous, thinking first of self. It will be so difficult to change myself, dear Mother. Pray for me that I may in time learn something of thy Son's generosity. Now—pray for me *now*, that I may make good use of my opportunities. Obtain for me the grace to learn generosity from all about me, and be ready now to serve Him with a whole heart. *And pray for me also at the hour of my death*, that I may at the call of God willingly, cheerfully and generously die how, where and when He wills. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, my too loving Lord, why did you endure so much for me? Was it, Lord, to make me love you? Why then am I so backward? Why am I so cold? Dear Lord, give me grace to be generous with you. Give me your own generosity, that I may suffer willingly at your call, and not only suffer, but work generously for you and for your friends.

### 3. The Crowning with Thorns

OUR Lord is taken into the barrack-room of the Roman soldiers, and there He is treated like a fool. Everything that He had said or that had been said about Him at His trial is used simply to give sport to these rude men. They were ingenious in their contemptuous abuse of Him. They had heard Pilate ask, "Shall I crucify your king?" and the idea of the King of the Jews suggested the royal state, and this they would give Him in mockery. They seated Him on a throne improvised from the rude furniture of their guard-room. They found Him a sceptre in a reed one of them had taken as a trophy of some expedition, but there was no crown. One of them bethought Him of a thorn-tree just near, and running out he brought back a long branch full of sharp long thorns. It



took a few moments to twist the branch into the form of a crown. They must be careful, for the thorns gave an ugly wound. When the improvised crown was finished the joke was greeted with loud laughter. Now they had their mock king with all his royal surroundings. They were careful in putting the crown on His head, not because of any respect they had for Him, but for the care they had for their own fingers. When in position they beat the crown down upon His head, for it must be secure. The pain was most intense. Why did He suffer this? Because so many of us are so touchy about being laughed at, about our words being turned so as to appear ridiculous; because we lose our temper and become annoyed, He would show us how to bear this trial—a serious and hard trial. After suffering this mockery during the whole night, the crowning as a mock king, merely to keep these soldiers in a good humour; after carrying the sceptre our Lord gives His first prayer on the cross for these very

men, and excuses them to His Father: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Mary was not present, though united most closely with her Son all the time. Her presence would have been a relief to Him which He did not wish to feel.

*Hail, Mary!* even in this scene of mockery worthy of all honour. *Full of grace*—ah! get me the grace not to be so touchy, so liable to sulk when a rude or unkind word is said to me. *The Lord is with thee*—the object of thy deepest sympathy. Help me to rest in that thought when I am mocked and treated with scorn; when I am laughed at for my piety, &c. Let me rest in the thought that meekness makes me nearer to Jesus, meek and humble of heart. *Blessed are thou amongst women.* Humble Virgin, willing to be thought nothing of, willing that Jesus should be treated with scorn for my sake, to teach me how to bear ridicule and rebuffs. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus,* meek and humble of heart.

How different from me with my pride and my sudden temper! *Holy Mary*, thinking not of thyself, but of God's will, accepting willingly poverty or reproach, or whatever He sends. *Mother of God*, and therefore joined to Him in love of lowliness, in desire to be thought little of so as to attract men and lead them to God. *Pray for us sinners*, so proud, so careless about God's will, and especially for me in my dealings with my friends. *Now* pray for me when I find things easier, that I may gain good habits which will be strength to me later. *And at the hour of my death*, that by accepting slights which Jesus sees are good for me, by joyfully acknowledging that I count for nothing, that it is well that I am not made much of, I may be more like to my scorned, derided Lord and dearer to thee, my Mother Mary. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, my King, be always King of my heart. Grant that I may bear also mockery and ridicule in your service.

Mary, my Mother, I grieve for you.

O Jesus, come to me and rule me as my King? Let me prepare for you not a mock but a real throne in my heart. Let me give you a real sceptre and acknowledge you as my only King. Let me crown you with the crown of generosity, and be ever more generous in my service of you.

#### 4. The Carrying of the Cross

MARY waits for our Lord at a most difficult part of the road, praying all the time. She feels every sharp stone which wounds His feet. She feels every jolt of the cross on His shoulder, every tug of the cord with which He is led by the soldiers, every drag of the clothes over the wounds made by the scourges. She is most closely united to Him. She knows that the sight of her will give Him as much pain as pleasure. Her sympathy gives Him relief, but her suffering makes His more intense. When He comes near they exchange glances, and both renew the offering they have often and often made together, accepting all that may in any way attract those whom He and she would love. They both pray that their friends in all time may have the courage to bear little things or

great as God may will. The lesson of this mystery is one of cheerful perseverance in the bearing the burden put upon us.

How cheerfully our Lord bore this cross ! He was sore and bruised, yet He made no excuse. He made no complaint. "Weep not for Me," He said, as if to say, "I have willingly taken this cross upon Myself. It represents the burden of sin, fashioned by each soul that I love. I would lighten that burden ; I would bear it all Myself." And yet the good Lord allowed another, not His Mother, but a common man, to help Him. At first, no doubt, unwillingly, but afterwards cheerfully and joyfully, Simon of Cyrene assisted Him.

*Hail, Mary, full of grace,* teaching me the fortitude necessary in my dull routine life. Love of Jesus and of those whom Jesus loved was the reason of thy fortitude. Let me not do my work for any other motive. Let me give my Lord a proof of my love in all I do or suffer. *The Lord is with thee.*

May He also be with me in my daily work and in the burden of uncongenial occupations. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, teaching them not to flinch when called upon to bear annoyance and weariness. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*, "who bore our sins on the tree." It was my burden Thou wast bearing up the hill, with Mary watching there. Be kind to me, and let not my burden be beyond my strength. Thou hast promised it, dear Lord. Be kind to me, and help me to bear any great sacrifice if Thou askest it. Do not leave me to myself; do not abandon me. *Holy Mary*, ever united to God both in joy and in pain. *Mother of God* and my Mother, by the suffering Thou didst endure as the Mother of Jesus, help me to lighten His load. If the soldiers would have allowed thee thou wouldst have taken the whole cross and borne it alone; let me by avoiding sin, by not being a cause of sin to others by my temper, my unreasonableness, my want of humility, my obstinacy, let me take a little

off the weight of the cross. Never let me add to it. *Pray for us sinners*, especially for me, so thoughtless in causing annoyance, so careless of the results of my actions if only I can be thought in the right. Teach me to think less of myself and more of how I may relieve my Lord of His burden. *Now*, when I am trying to serve God more faithfully; now, when I find it easy to think of thy Son and thee, that I may gain a habit which may last with me. *And at the hour of my death*, teach me to bear the burdens I shrink from, to bear them with Jesus and thee, till I recognize the bearing of the cross as the safest way to God for ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, sharing your cross with one who was of little account, share it also with me, who am of no account! At least, when I can help you, Lord, allow me to do so. Make me faithful that I may be allowed to help you.

Mary, my Mother, help me to bear my own cross: bad habits I have fallen into;



the difficulties in the service of God which my sins have brought upon me. When shall I so sympathize with you and your Son that I may be willing to do and to suffer for Him? When shall I help to lighten the burden of His friends, the poor, the neglected, the abused?

## 5. The Crucifixion

As the former portion of His Passion had been without reserve, so the last act on the cross was most complete. He would leave nothing undone that could attract the sympathy and love of men. He Himself told the disciples just before His Passion that if He were lifted up He would draw all things to Himself. He draws us by His merciful thought for His executioners, giving them the only excuse that could be found—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He attracts us by His divine kindness to the poor thief; by His gift to us of His own Mother; by His allowing Himself to feel that desolation which is such a severe trial to His servants. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken

Me?" He draws us to Himself by the intense longing He exhibits for our soul's good—"I thirst." He draws us also to admire and to love Him by the very completeness of His work for our salvation—"It is consummated." Lastly, He draws us by His divine trust in His Father—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He parts with the last drop of His Blood, and our Mother consents to His sacrifice, consents willingly to His death. The crowd still jeer at Him, though He is suffering death for their sakes. I am at the foot of the cross also. I do not jeer, thank God; but even here I will not be wholly generous. I still refuse to give up some pet habit, refuse something that Jesus asks me to give Him. O Jesus! do not ask of me too hard a sacrifice, for I am so weak; but do Thou give me the grace and the courage to give Thee whatever Thou seest to be for my good.

*Hail, Mary!* so completely resigned to

God's will, so generous, not hindering, but freely helping thy Son in His great sacrifice ; how different thou art from me who am so selfish, so greedy of little enjoyments ! Put into me the spirit of resignation. I do not ask that I might not care, or that I might not feel the sacrifice, but I ask that, caring much and feeling most intensely, I may have the courage to relinquish whatever my Lord asks of me. *Full of grace*, trusting in grace, resting on grace, not on self, as I have done. *The Lord is with thee*, now more especially when thou art losing Him. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, for here beneath the cross thou dost teach all to centre their love on God, to study only His will, to love only what He would have us love. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. Blessed in the love He had for me ; blessed in the help He has given me ; blessed in the wish He has given me to know and love Him better. O Jesus ! if it be Thy will, let me also love others for Thy sake, but let me never be so attached to any one, dear Lord, that I may

become blind to Thy attractions, deaf to Thy voice. *Holy Mary*, ever with thy will united to God's will. *Mother of God*, and yet giving up thy Divine Son at the call of God, *pray for us sinners*, especially for me, that I may have the courage to sacrifice my pleasures and my joys in the interests of Jesus. *Now*, when I am willing to do all that is asked of me, that I may gain courage to do the same when I shall find it more difficult. *And at the hour of my death*. If ever I leave my Lord, help me at least to return to Him then and love Him with my whole heart, and all else in Him and for Him. *Amen*.

*Acts*.—Jesus, draw me to yourself. Fill me with your generous, whole-hearted spirit that I may have no reserves in your service. When shall I allow myself to feel the full force of that sweet attraction? Preserve me from being a hindrance to others, from standing between any soul and you. Dear Mother Mary, give me of your own resignation, your own generous love,

that I may take you to my own and learn  
your spirit and your love till my life is  
finished and I join you in your praise of  
our Lord for ever and ever.

## THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

### 1. The Resurrection

OUR Lord appears first to His Mother, then to Magdalen, and then to the Apostles. He brings joy everywhere. He has no thought except for their joy. How exquisite is His thoughtfulness for Magdalen! The poor sinner who has given her poor and apparently ruined life to Him, and whose life and love have been accepted by Him, is called by her name when most dejected, when almost distracted by the loss of Him. "Mary!" and she called Him by the dearest title, "Master!"—the one who teaches me, leads me, loves me, cares for me—Master, my Master. Mary, His Mother, is with

Him at that moment, not in body, but in heart; and even in her triumph and joy caring for this poor repentant sinner, loving her whom her Son loved, and glad that He should leave herself because He was pleased to be kind to poor Magdalen.

So also is she willing to procure joy for me, and to let her Son come to me and call me by my name, if only through the faithful following of her teaching, and the imitation of her life, I can bring myself to acknowledge her Son as my Master in all things. My Master He is in prayer, letting no business interfere with it. My Master in charity, never thinking of Himself. My Master in prudence and reasonableness, never asking another to do what He Himself is not willing to do. My Master in fortitude when His Father's business demanded it. Thus He must be to me a Master indeed, and His Mother will teach me how I am to follow Him in all things till I am able to rise from the grave of self, and can bring His joy into other lives.



*Hail, Mary!* loving all those who love thy Son; unselfishly letting Him go from thee for another's sake as thou didst unselfishly let Him leave thee to be crucified. *Full of grace* and willing to use the grace given to thee for others and for me also, dear Mother. *The Lord is with thee* first and last and always, but especially when He is kind to those that love Him. Oh send Him also to me, that I may love Him as Magdalen did—wholly, without reserve, giving up at His word all other love. Let me be ready to give up whatever He may ask me that He may visit me and call me by my name. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, teaching all, and me in particular, what it is that Jesus loves, and what He wishes me to do that I may be worthy to know Him. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Blessed in the hope He has given me by His Resurrection; blessed in the love He has taught me by His care for thee and Magdalen and the poor frightened Apostles. *Holy Mary*, knowing God's ways and determined not

to hinder them for the sake of any joy of thy own. *Mother of God* and my Mother, showing me Jesus. Teach me how to love Him and serve Him unselfishly, purely, carefully. *Pray for us sinners*, and especially for me, as thou didst pray for Magdalen, converting her from sin by thy prayers, and rejoicing her heart by thy generous gift of thy Son. Pray for me, dear Mother, that I may not hesitate to give up my own joy when it is for another's good. *Now*, when joy is very precious to me that I may not think too highly of it, and may not value it, however great it may be, above the love of my Lord. *And at the hour of my death*, when I, too, shall triumph over death and come to thee. Make me happy in that hour by sending me Jesus to comfort me and to call me by my name, that I may go to Him and be with Him for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, my Master, take possession of me. Teach me and guide me, my Lord and Master. Teach me all goodness, and

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let me not reap only sorrow and anxiety from your service, as I have so often done hitherto. In your goodness give me some little of the joy of your Resurrection.

## 2. The Ascension

OUR Lord had been for forty days with His disciples. He had confirmed them in the faith He had given to them. He had continued His instructions, and after the Passion and Resurrection they were more capable of understanding Him. He had brought many things to their minds which they had heard and forgotten or only partially understood, and now He is going to leave them. He had promised to be with them always even to the end of the world, but it was expedient for them that His bodily presence should be taken from them. It was necessary that they should fight the battle of their life, not indeed without His help, but still in a manner by themselves. "It is expedient for you that I go." Our Lady, too, had enjoyed

much intercourse with Him, and had learnt how she might be of use to the young Church; how she might see it through its first fervour; how she could help to keep alive the ideals her Son had implanted in the hearts of His followers. Our Lord gave them all His last instructions, and as He was speaking to them He raised His hands in blessing, and whilst He blessed them He Himself was raised from the earth, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Our Lady, the disciples, and the holy women kept their eyes fixed upon Him as long as He was to be seen, and they were brought to the earth again by the voices of the angels, who told them of His second coming, and warned them that they must prepare for that coming by fidelity to the teaching they had received. And they went with great joy to Jerusalem. Our Lady, too, was full of joy, for she knew it was the will of God that she should remain and do much for her adopted children.

*Hail, Mary!* in thy new life separated from and yet most united to thy Son. Teach me to bring Him into my life; to receive His blessing with joy. Full of grace, the dispenser of grace in this new, lonely, but most happy life. *The Lord is with thee* as He may also be with me, blessing all I do, inspiring me to labour for His interests, quietly, unobtrusively, leaving the reward to Him, wholly trusting Him; trusting all those who lead me to Him. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, left forlorn as so many are, such as are wives and mothers, having only Jesus to trust in. Teach me to know Him and to love Him though I see Him not.

*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Blessed because of His kindness to me; blessed because of all the helps He gives to me; blessed especially because He has not left me an orphan. O Jesus! leave us not orphans spiritually. In Thy goodness and Thy kindness be good and kind to me. *Holy Mary*, even here willing only what God wills. Willingly taking St. John and the rest

of the disciples and me instead of Jesus. Oh, teach me to do God's will always. *Mother of God* and my Mother; Mother of God, and yet letting Jesus leave thee. Ah! let me not leave thee, dear Mother. Let not those I love leave thee. Be kind, too, to those who have no one to love them. Do thou love them and help them. *Pray for us sinners*, for me who so easily lose all thought of Jesus after Holy Communion or after prayer. Pray for me that I may always live with my Lord present in my heart. *Now*, in joy and sweetness of a new life; *and at the hour of death*, pray for me that with thee and all the Saints I may be united to Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, in your glory do not forget me. Though you are withdrawn from my sight let me not forget you. Still make your home in my heart, and rule everything I do. I can do nothing without you. Keep me constant by your divine example. How much I have to thank you for, Lord! You

have always been most kind. Let me not by my negligence force you to say, "I know you not." But in your own time receive me to the place you have gone to prepare for me. Mary, my Mother, be as interested in my life as you were in the life of the infant Church.



### 3. The Descent of the Holy Ghost

TEN days after the Ascension our Lady and the disciples were gathered together. They had spent the time since our Lord had gone from them in prayer. "They were always in the temple praising and blessing God." On the morning of the feast of Pentecost they were gathered together. They did not know how the Holy Spirit was to come to them. They were quietly waiting because of their great trust in our Lord. Yet the Holy Spirit came suddenly, not without warning, for they had been told, yet suddenly. They were all prepared. There was no traitor among them, and therefore they all received according to their needs and the needs of the Church. The Holy Spirit brought them the confirmation of their faith and fortitude

which should enable them to preach the faith to others. He instilled into them the spirit of kindness and consideration of which our Lord had given them so many examples. Hitherto the Apostles had been inclined to be self-assertive, even when they were so weak. Now in the strength brought them by the Holy Spirit they were humble and meek, after the example of our Lord ; and because of that humility and meekness they were made strong to do the very arduous work before them. Our Lady had from the first learnt the sweet humility of her Son, and therefore when the disciples failed she had always been strong, for she relied not at all on herself.

*Hail, Mary, full of grace, ever growing in grace, knowing thy dignity and thy strength as the Mother of Jesus, yet relying on thy humility, teach me to be humble of heart. Teach me to rely no longer on myself, but on the grace given to me by my Lord. The Lord is with thee by His Holy Spirit. The*

Lord has always been with thee, never leaving thee. Get me the grace to be so careful and conscientious a follower of thee that the spirit of my Lord may be with me—the spirit of reliance on His priests; the spirit of humility and trust in Him. Put aside in me all self-assertion, and let me learn the kindness and meekness which Jesus taught. *Blessed art thou amongst women.* Blessed in thy strength which is not thine but God's, the only source of true strength. Blessed in thy weakness so readily acknowledged, so thankfully accepted. Blessed in thy dealings with the disciples. Take me also under thy guardianship. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus,* promising the Comforter and sending Him according to promise. Blessed in His care for me; blessed for the joy and comfort He has sent me. *Holy Mary, Mother of God,* and apparently not needing another incoming of the Holy Ghost, but receiving Him for our sakes. Never content with the amount of grace received, ever opening thy heart for more,

make me also ready to accept the graces Jesus offers me, though they may cost me trouble, and perhaps anxiety. *Pray for us sinners*, especially for me, so careless of grace, so easily kept by human respect from using the means of grace, so easily turned from prayer. Pray for me, dear Mother, that I may ever enlarge my heart for the grace of fortitude and of meekness so that I may grow more and more like to Jesus and dear to Him. *Now*, whilst the spirit of Jesus is with me that I may correspond with that grace and merit all that is needed for my life hereafter. *And at the hour of my death*, that then, too, the Holy Spirit may strengthen me and make me cheerful to accept God's will. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—O Jesus, I thank you for your kindness in sending the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and upon the Church. Send Him also to me. Let Him bring all things to my mind that I may never forget your holy law. Holy Spirit, come to me and

make me constant in prayer. Make me constant in humility and in love of the holy Church. Make me mindful of all that you are doing for the Church now. Let me see your influence, and thank you for it always.

#### 4. The Assumption

WHEN the time of her death appointed by her Son arrived, it found our Lady full of ever-increasing graces, ready to join our Lord in heaven. That her pure soul should go to heaven where it had been in desire during her whole life, it was necessary that she should die. The separation of her most pure soul from her most chaste body she offered as a last sacrifice to her divine Son. The disciples laid her body in the tomb, and some few days afterwards, coming to the tomb to satisfy St. Thomas's devotion, they found the body was not there, and concluded that their Lord and Master had given His divine Mother this last privilege, and taken her body into heaven so that she might at once enjoy the full and complete glory

destined for her in body as well as in her soul. Our Lord wished for His own sake that our Lady should be body and soul in heaven. He desired the same also for our sakes. She was designed by God as the dispenser of His personal favours to us ; and as He took our flesh that He might be in perfect human accord with us, so He wished His Mother to be to us not a separated soul, however holy, but a complete human being, body and soul. He wished this in order to inspire us with more confidence in her.

*Hail, Mary!* my Mother, my advocate at the throne of God, gain for me some of the strong desire that filled thy breast, to be near thy Son, to know Him and love Him in a close personal love. Teach me to be afraid when I find myself forgetting Him. *Full of grace*, by which thou wert so closely joined to God. Help me who am so far away from Him, who so often forget Him and His interests. Beg of Him to pour His grace

into me that I may have some of that personal love of Him which filled thy breast. *The Lord is with thee* for ever now. Ah! if I should ever leave Him, let the love of Him which I desire, and which thou wilt obtain for me, bring me back again to Him. *Blessed art thou amongst women.* Blessed on earth, doubly blessed now in heaven. Blessed by thy close personal union which Jesus allowed thee, and which thou didst guard so well. Let me also live always with my Lord, and be blessed in a like manner. Let nothing come between Jesus and myself; let nothing take my heart from Him. *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Blessed for His love of thee which would not let Him leave thy most pure body in the tomb. Blessed for the love He has also for me. How kind He has been to me! Kind always, kind everywhere. May I never lose that kindness. What a thought that I may, if I am not careful, make my kind Jesus angry with me! *Holy Mary*, so humble though God wishes to glorify thee, even



here cheerfully submitting to His will. Let me also take praise and commendation in the same spirit as thou didst, passing it all on to my Lord. *Mother of God*, having power with Him, power to command. Use thy power for me. Let me ever advance in the love of my Lord till I may love Him with the same personal, intense love which belonged to thee as His Mother. *Pray for us sinners*, and most especially for me who am so kindly treated by my Lord that I may not become unworthy of His favours. *Now*, when I feel His love and thine helping me, that I may prepare myself for a time when things may not be so easy. *And at the hour of death*, oh, pray for me then that I may go to Jesus to be with Him for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—How good of you, Lord, for my sake, to take your Virgin Mother into heaven body and soul! You show me, Lord, that you wish for my personal love and service.

Dear Mother Mary, I congratulate you on this great favour. Intercede for me, dear Mother, that my body may not be to me a drag in my spiritual life.

## 5. The Coronation

WHEN our Lady entered heaven it was fitting that she should be acknowledged as the Queen of heaven, and therefore we love to think of the glory given to her by her Son under the image of the greatest earthly glory. She is the Queen of sanctity, and as such has a particular regard for all who are striving to follow her in the path of perfection. She is our patroness and protectress. Amid all her glory she thinks of us—our wants and difficulties. Raised so high in heaven she sees all the more clearly our troubles great or small, and takes not only a universal interest but a most personal and particular interest in all that concerns us. As Queen of heaven and dispenser of the manifold gifts of grace won by her Son, she is able to help us at all times. She will use her power

to the full if we will only acknowledge her queenship and unite with all the Saints in giving her all the glory in our power.

*Hail, Mary*, surrounded by the saints, let me be among those who stand about thee. *Full of grace*, empty of self that grace might take the place of self. Look upon me so full of self that grace can find very little room. Help me, dear Mother, to root out of myself my own will so that I may be filled with thy spirit which is the Spirit of God. *The Lord is with thee*, now for ever, thy crown and thy joy. Thou hast been the cause of our joy. Be ever, dearest Mother, the cause of joy to me that in gladness, casting aside fear, I may have my Lord always with me. *Blessed art thou amongst women*, showing us how we may share in thy blessedness by not seeking self, but by seeking Jesus thy Son. *Blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus*. Blessed in His sufferings; blessed because He has prepared a place for me in heaven. Let me not make myself unworthy of Him

and thee, dear Mother. *Holy Mary*, ever seeking God and His will in joy as in sorrow, *Mother of God*, now that thou art in heaven and enjoying to the full the company of thy Son, look down upon me so much in need of encouragement, and give me some little of thy joy that I, too, may have Jesus with me. *Pray for us sinners*, and especially for me, that I may cheerfully and joyfully do the work God has given me, for thou knowest so well the value of cheerful service. Thou knowest that I lose much by want of cheerfulness, lose much for myself, and lose also the power of bringing joy to others. *Now*, in my little daily crosses, in my want of sympathy with those around me ; help me to bear my own trials bravely that I in my turn may by God's grace help others. *And at the hour of my death*, do not forget me then. Take me under Thy special care in that hour that full of joy I may come to thee, not repining at the loss of anything on earth, but rejoicing to come to Jesus and thee for ever. *Amen.*

*Acts.*—Jesus, my King and my God, I thank you for the honour you have done to your Mother. In your mercy allow me, unworthy though I am, to join you and your Saints in thus honouring the Mother you have given to me.

Mary, my Queen and my Mother, have a care of me. Bring me nearer and nearer to your Son day by day. Grant me so to persevere in my devotion to you that I may be acknowledged as your devoted servant, your subject, your child.

## THE "OUR FATHER"

BESIDES the "Hail Mary" the "Our Father" enters into the holy Rosary, so that these little helps would not be complete without something about this prayer being said.

The great beauty of the "Our Father" is that it was given to the disciples by our Lord Himself, and in answer to the request that He would teach them how to pray.

It may be used in so many ways. It would be too long to give a paraphrase of the "Our Father" for each mystery. But the general intention of the Rosary, as explained in the Introduction, will allow us to use it in relation to the Life of our Lord.

*Our Father*, shown to us by Thy Son in His life amongst us, manifested by Him as Thou wert never known by

men before, encourage us to think of Thee under this loving title; no longer to stand in dread of Thee as the Almighty God, but to be willing to run to Thee always as our Father *who art in heaven*, yet coming to us at all times, and taking Thy rest in our hearts with Thy Son and Thy Holy Spirit, making our hearts glad. Give me grace so to imitate Thy Son Jesus that where Thou art I may be with Thee.

*Hallowed be Thy name.* To praise Thy holy name must be the work of my life. Let me learn how to honour Thy name by studying the method which Thy own Son has taught me in His life. This, I know, my Father, is Thy wish, for it was Thou who didst send Him to us that we might learn how Thou dost wish us to honour Thee.

*Thy kingdom come,* in the world, in the Church, and in the hearts of men. Set up Thy kingdom in my heart. Establish Thy throne there that I may give Thee all honour at all times in Thy own palace. Let me be Thy own, subject to



Thee at all times and in all things. Grant me so to live that the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour, Thy Son, may be established for ever in me, that I may do nothing but what Thou, my King and Father, wishest me to do. Ah, me, how often I have rebelled and tried to set up another king, even myself in Thy place! That Thy kingdom may be with me always grant that Thy will be done. I must not try to bend Thee to my will as I have tried to do so often in my prayers, but in searching lovingly in the life of Thy Son which was lived from first to last to do Thy will, I will try to learn what Thy divine will is. In my prayer to Thee I will try to leave what may seem to me to be worth praying for that thou mayst do just Thy will with me in all things.

*Thy will be done*, then, *on earth* here where Thou art hidden from us, though so close in love and care; here where we must search and take trouble to find out what Thy will is; here where we may make mistakes as to what Thy divine will is.

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*As it is in heaven*—there there will be no difficulty, Father. There we shall see Thee even more plainly than we can see our Lord Thy Son, for we shall have Thy will in us. Would that it were so now that I might so have Thee in the centre of my soul that my will should be Thy will, and the whole force of my will should be that it was Thine, wholly resigned to Thee, moved only by Thee, directed only to Thee.

*Give us this day our daily bread*, not only the food of the body which we take from Thy hand, but that bread of life which Thy Son, urged by Thee, spoke amongst us: "I speak the things My Father gives me to speak." And not only this blessed bread of the word of Thy Son and Thy word, given me each day in my prayer, but give me also daily that other Bread which is no longer bread but the Body of Thy Son, if not in the Holy Sacrament, at least spiritually. Give me a great desire for this Bread of life and salvation.

*And forgive us our trespasses*, the daily,

hourly infidelities I am guilty of. It is good for me that I fail so often, Father, for my failure forces me to fly to Thee for forgiveness. Remember me, my God, Thy son, Thy child, however erring and wilful, and help me to turn to Thee and never to be tired of turning to Thee again and again, for I know that Thou lovest mercy. Make my faults less and less that I may more readily obtain forgiveness when I do fail. *As we forgive them that trespass against us.* Let me learn Thy own forgiving way, dear Father. Thou art so kind ; make me kind after Thy example, that I may be ready to forgive if any offend me. Make me forgive without reserve as freely and as completely as I hope Thou hast forgiven me.

*And lead us not into temptation.* How can I expect my Father to lead me into temptation unless it be for my good? If I am to be subjected to this trial do Thou, Lord, uphold me and let me trust in Thee and turn at once to Thee. How lovingly Thy Son allowed the dis-

principles to be tempted that they might learn their own weakness and be forced to see that their whole strength lay in trust in Thee! Do not let me fail in any temptation that may be for my good.

*Deliver us from evil*, more especially evil of the soul, which is sin. May I by Thy power be kept free from all wilful sin. If it be Thy will, let other evils come upon me, but be gentle with me, Father, for I am so weak; and unless Thou support me I shall be able to bear but little. Help me, then, and strengthen me, and purify me by suffering if it be Thy holy will, but do not let me ever leave Thee whatever pains I have to bear. Thy will be done.  
*Amen.*





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